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M E M O I R S
OF THE
NORTHERN IMPOSTOR;
Or PRINCE OF SWINDLERS.

Being a faithful Narrative of the ADVENTURES and DECEPTIONS of JAMES GEORGE SEMPLE, commonly called

MAJOR SEMPLE,

alias HARROLD, MAXWELL, GRANT, &c. &c.

With an Account of his Devices at Lord SALISBURY's, Sir THOMAS DUNDASS's, Mr. PITT's, the MARQUIS of LANDSDOWN's, Baron HOMPESCH, Lord SUFFIELD, Sir SAMPSON GIDEON, Dr. PRETTYMAN, &c. &c.

Also the various Inventions by which he obtained Goods of different Tradesmen; and the Names of the Persons who were the Objects of his Depredations.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED
His TRIAL, and SENTENCE.

LONDON:

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The artifices of that arch swindler, Major Semple, induced various persons who have been plundered by him to contribute, without the least view to profit, (as appears by the bulk of the work, which is equal in quantity to a half-crown pamphlet) to print an account of the different modes by which he accomplished his fraudulent views; and they employed Mr. Kearsley in Fleet-street, as their publisher.

About two days after its appearance, another compilation was also advertised; and, in order to deceive, part of Kearsley's title was taken, viz. "*The Northern Hero.*"

However, upon inspection, it turns out a work of imagination; a mere romance, barren of any facts, except a few that appeared in the public prints, relative to Semple's commitment.

The reader being informed of this imposition, it can scarcely be necessary to point out the propriety of examining the title: such copies as have not Kearsley's name at the bottom of the title are of the above spurious edition.

* * * At the request of several gentlemen who favoured us with the following anecdotes, we have, in this edition, in order to prevent all possibility of deception, changed the original title of *THE NORTHERN HERO*, to that of *THE NORTHERN IMPOSTOR*.

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S. JOURNEY, p. 226.

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TO

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TO

JAMES ADAIR, ESQUIRE,

SERJEANT AT LAW,

AND

RECORDER OF THE CITY OF LONDON.

SIR,

THE following pages are dedicated to you, as the humble mite of an individual, who has long been an observer of your conduct in the high station to which your private virtues and public merit have so justly raised you.

Your great concern for, and circumspection in, the security of property, and the freedom of the subject, have gained you a name which will live as long as the Whig interest of this country shall exist.

I am,

SIR,

With the most profound respect,

Your obedient humble Servant,

The COMPILER.

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The Parsons's Cow,
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mances and dramatic pieces have been founded.*

MEMOIRS.

MEMOIRS, &c.

IT is neither a new nor a singular observation, that every century hath produced a Genius, and every country an Hero. There is no necessity to have recourse to the annals of the ancients, or to the multiplied instances of modern history to justify the assertion. France has had her Charlatan, and her Comtesse de la Motte. Jonathan Wild, and Mrs. Margareta Matilda Sophia Carolina Rudd, may safely dispute the laurel with the Gallic Hero and Heroine: but Britain, the queen of isles, seems to be the natural soil for the cultivation of such genius and heroism.

A few years, however, have determined to whom the laurel wreath is due. We have had Ministers of the Church of England executed for forgery and murder, and a Methodist Preacher, in holy orders, hanged for abusing young children, to whom he was school-master. Lawyers and Contractors have kept perjury in countenance; and the GREAT CHARLES PRICE, justly stiled *The SOCIAL MONSTER*, rushed into

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the presence of his Maker, rather than have his genius recorded in the Ordinary's Calendar of Newgate Heroes.

The progress of heroism has led us into these observations. They prove, that a very few years have eclipsed the transactions of ages, and that England can boast of more renowned exploits in that short period of time, than ever were signalled throughout all Europe during the last century.

It was the reflection of a great lawyer, that the laws of this country were made to bind a *bold* and *daring* race of people. In his days, the refinements of modern villainy were unknown, and therefore unpractised. The name of SWINDLER, a creature begot between Downright Robbery and Dame Forgery, was unheard of.

It is also an established truth, that the powers of legislation can never keep pace with inventive knavery, the natural depravity of mankind baffling every attempt to deter it. The efforts of moral writers have been equally successful to restrain the vicious part of it from unprincipled dishonesty.—Thus whilst the absurdity of our penal statutes have opened doors of invitation to ingenious chicanery, the scandalous and contemptible artifices of dirty pettifogging attornies, and Old Bailey bar-orators, have given a loose and encouragement to every species of fraud and imposition.

To

To instance this—An act of parliament was made, which decreed it a capital offence to steal horses, mares, or geldings. The first man who was ever tried upon that act pleaded the *singular* number.—As he had only stolen *a horse*, he was—Acquitted.—It was a penal statute, and not to be *liberally* construed.—The *text* was to be strictly adhered to.

To prevent the receiving of stolen goods, knowing them to have been stolen, in the enumeration of the articles, watches were omitted. They are held not to come under the description of goods, wares, or merchandize: a receiver of stolen goods may therefore purchase as many watches as he pleases, of whom he pleases, and at what price he thinks proper!

In the act against dog-stealing, the magistrate has a power to fine, imprison, and order the immediate correction of the house. After conviction, and when the culprit's back has been flead, he may, by a very wise provision in that act, appeal to the quarter sessions to reverse the flogging!

Turnips might have been stolen with impunity, for they were omitted in the act that made it felony to steal any thing else out of gardens, fields, &c. &c. in consequence of which a new act was made.

It is well known also, that a man may set fire to his *own* house, and not be punishable by any statute law.

These preposterous absurdities and scandalous technical omissions call loudly for the interposition and inspection of the Twelve Judges, whenever a penal statute is framed. The various and curious labyrinths of the laws would then be reduced into a plain and easy road, nor would the incorrigible rogue find a *stimulus* from their subtle and encouraging constructions.

The only argument that ever was advanced against consulting the Judges on these occasions is, that they are servants and officers of the crown, *durante bene placitur*, and therefore ought never to interfere in framing laws, where the preservation of his Majesty's crown and dignity is concerned, as they may be supposed to be partial to their royal master.—To answer this flimsy argument is neither our business or design at present.

But though these legal inaccuracies and curious distinctions operate, in one sense, to the great disadvantage of the community, yet in another, they afford the most pleasing satisfaction, by protecting the life, liberty, and property of Englishmen. For if laws are ever to be construed otherwise than written, a partial and severe Judge, or a packed and corrupt Jury, might stretch the arm of resentment, either to serve their own private animosities, or to favour the designing views of an arbitrary and profligate administration.

The late Sir John Fielding, whose unwearied endeavours to check the progress of all sorts of vice, must make his name remembered with high respect, discovered, in his official capacity, the very great misfortune of what we now complain.—He daily experienced the triumph of villainy especially in that line which is now the subject of this performance.—He applied to parliament, and with much difficulty he procured an act for the better prevention of frauds, (the 30th of Geo. II.) commonly called *Fielding's Act*, which secures the property of tradesmen from the pernicious arts of those public robbers, usually denominated SWINDLERS; for that which was then deemed but a debt, is now determined to be a felony.

To that magistrate, therefore, are the public indebted for the detection of that delinquent, whose extraordinary feats of ingenuity have struck so much alarm and terror throughout the private as well as mercantile line of life.—At the same time justice obliges us to add, that the exertions of Mr. Feltham, co-operating with the spirit of that act, have carried into effect an event that has for many years been most devoutly wished.

We must observe also, that although cultivated knavery is generally imputed to the southern inhabitants of this island, yet the perfection of the science was reserved for a native of North Britain.

After

After this exordium we proceed to our subject.

James George Semple was born about the year 1750, at Irvine, in the shire of Ayr, and is now about thirty-six years of age. He is the son of a Mr. James Semple, who was once a surveyor in the custom house at Scotland; who is also living, but from some occasion or other, has *resigned* his place.

We were the more particular in this circumstance, not only as it satisfies our readers of the birth and parentage of our Hero, but also, as it leads to a circumstance that could not possibly be omitted, especially in a narrative of such great actions as we mean to transmit to posterity.

In the year 1547, the title of Lord Viscount Lysle, of the kingdom of Scotland became *extinct*; The reader may be assured it was not *attainted*. There is no record whatever of its disaffection to government, and therefore may be justly stiled as loyal a family as any that North Britain can boast.

The dormancy of this title has continued two hundred and thirty-nine years. The father of our Hero, James Semple, we hear has lately laid claim to it. We mention this to shew that there is strong supposition of the dregs of very rich blood running in the veins of James George Semple. It also not only adds an importance and dignity to
his

his character, but interests the reader a little more in his fate. To have a Hero the descendant of a long line of ancestry, is one great effort of modern tragedy ; but without searching the histories of the Greeks and Romans, or rummaging the Ottoman traditions, we have *ipso facto*, such an interesting character from the highlands of Scotland. The phoenix of the family of Lysle.

His education was at the place of his nativity, Irvine ; and it would be superfluous to add, that he was soon made conversant in Latin and Greek. In those exercises he had no competitor ; his juvenile abilities soon distinguished themselves, and kept his school-fellows at an humble distance. We may add too, that as his years increased, some other eminent proficiencies kept them at a still greater. To be plain, most of the parents of the scholars of Irvine were under the necessity of directing their children not to associate with James George Semple.

As he grew towards manhood, an elegant figure, a person exceeding well made, and a genteel deportment gave him a pre-eminency in point of attraction. To these ornaments were added, an understanding capable of every improvement, and an affability of temper, so consonant to *the things that be*, that he was a most engaging companion, wherever he could introduce himself.

These

These qualifications, notwithstanding the others we just hinted at, whilst they procured him the envy and dislike of the male part of the creation, made him ample amends by the favour and esteem in which he was held by the females of all ranks, ages and conditions.

One observation arises here. These tinsel attractions, and these flattering partialities of the ladies, are the rocks on which our youth have too frequently split. They are the Scylla and Charibdis of every young man, whose knowledge is like a whipt syllabub, and whose vanity leads him to suppose himself something, when in truth and in fact they reduce him to a mere non-entity. One deformed sensible good man, is of more service to society than a thousand gay superficial flutterers, with fine figures, even tho' they should be vulgarly honest. Ex. Gr.

To the partiality of the sex, we hear Mr. Semple was indebted for his abdication of Irvine; but we wish not to wound the vitals of suffering credulity in one sex, by exposing the iniquitous arts of the other; or to hang up the name of a lady, when we wish only to delineate the character of James George Semple. In order to improve his natural advantages, he was sent, as we are informed, to the college at Edinburgh, and intended for the Kirk, to which profession he was originally bred. He had not, however, been long there, before he gave ample proofs, that the study of
religion

religion was not calculated for a person of his lively disposition and gay turn of mind. The study of physic was then proposed to him, but that science was too abstruse and technical to attract his attention. Law seemed to be his favorite amusement at college, and his father, determined to let his son take what course of study he pleased, agreed he should become a lawyer, no doubt with a view to prevent his becoming a rogue.

This reminds us of a repartee made use of by the magistrate whose name we have already mentioned. A fellow who made it a practice to pay sixpence for a basin of soup at various coffee-houses, and steal at the same time a silver table spoon, was at last detected. Sir John Fielding asked him what he was? To which the gentleman replied, "I belong to the Law, Sir." "The Law! pshaw! damme! that's impossible," said Sir John, "if you did you would have stolen the *basin* too."

How long he continued his studies there we are not thoroughly acquainted with, but we are informed that it is near nine years since his name was first enrolled on the lists in the black book of Bow-street, under the title, CHEVALIERS DES INDUSTRIES. From this account we may draw a tolerable calculation that he had not been a considerable time in London, before he recommended himself to the notice and attention of the police.

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Having thus traced Mr. Semple's nativity and education, we beg leave to say a little more respecting his first introduction into this great metropolis, where abilities like his have a wide field to display themselves in, and where industry never can be in want of a guinea.

The situation of Mr. Semple's father had been naturally such, as to bring him to the knowledge of a certain gentleman, who was intimate with a Scotch merchant, who was acquainted with an attorney, or rather writer at Edinburgh, who was the friend of a gentleman who was very well acquainted with one of the lords of Trade, now one of the lords of his Majesty's Bed-chamber, who was an intimate friend of one of the directors of the East India Company.

Now it so happened, that there was such a good understanding between that certain gentleman, that Scotch merchant, and the lawyer, who transacted the business of the said lord, that the writer, upon the first application, declared that young Semple *should* have a place in the East India Company's service abroad.

Upon this absolute promise from such a great man, the elder Semple equipped James George with all proper materials for such a journey to the East; not forgetting the requisites necessary to convey him to London, where he supposed he had
nothing

nothing to do but to call on the chairman of that company and receive his appointment.

Notwithstanding, however, that absolute promise, young Semple found some little difficulty in obtaining it; and, being a *bon vivant*, he exhausted his resources with a facility that soon compelled him to have recourse to the old man for a fresh supply, under the pretence of the necessary extravagance he was compelled to live at in London.

Having obtained a supply, he dissipated that with as much speed as he had done his former finances; and whilst his applications at the East-India House, and attendance there, should have been renewed with hourly vigour, his only study was to adorn his sweet person, and commence fine gentleman. The laziness of his life soon led him into company, capable of completing his utmost wishes, and all ideas of venturing so dangerous a voyage and climate were as soon exploded.

Gay life and gay company speedily brought on unhappy projects to support it. It was to this inadvertent step in the elder Semple, of intrusting his son as his own master in a town, where the utmost resolution and fortitude are too often ineffectual security against vice and debauchery, that the younger Semple owes his ruin. It was more highly criminal in him, as he knew the natural bent of his son's inclinations. Let us pity,

therefore, whilst we condemn; though at the same time, the inadvertence of a father is no apology for the immoralities of a son.

In the pursuit of his pleasure, it was a little unfortunate for a family of great character and respect in Devonshire, the G——ts, that he became their acquaintance. To the daughter of it, it was a most irreparable misfortune. She was married to him, and it was not long before Mr. Semple gave very convincing proofs how his noble blood inspired him to maintain, unfulfilled, the honour and dignity of the house of Lyfle.

After he had married into the before-mentioned family, and his way of life had so disgusted the lady's parents, that they never would consent to see him, they offered to settle upon her 200l. per ann. if she would quit her husband. But such is the prevalence of passion in the female part of the creation, that they are not only blind to their own interests, but to the defects and vices of him, who, unhappily, chances to be the God of their idolatry.

Mrs. Semple then refused the offer; but at length, wearied with habitual enormities, she has consented to remove herself entirely out of his reach. Not thinking herself safe in England, where she could be pestered with his visits and applications, she wisely chose to retire to a spot where the singularity of his adventures has foreclosed

all

all ideas of disturbance. She is now at Calais; where Mr. Semple, for a long time past, has not ventured to make his appearance, and for a reason which to him was a very formidable one. He had already experienced the pleasures of three years imprisonment in Calais gaol; and, not desirous of revisiting his old habitation, very wisely omitted that sea-port in his latter visits to the continent.

The university of Oxford also has had the honour of Mr. Semple's being a member of their county gaol for debt; where he remained only five days, and was then matriculated.

We have it also from good authority, that he frequented every place of fashionable amusement, and was received by some families of distinction as a visitor, and as a gentleman of birth and character, whose father was claiming an extinct title.

Tell me your company and I'll tell you the man, is a very old saying. How far it was verified by Mr. Semple, the lowest capacity can judge. As there was no company in life which he had not entered into, from the plain gentleman up to the representative of Majesty, so had he contracted their principles, he must with his qualifications, have been an ornament to society; but as Shakespeare says, *Tow'ring ambition which over-vaulteth itself,* was the source of all his misfortunes. He would keep great company, which must be attended with a great expence; and in order to furnish himself
with

with the means of supporting it, he was compelled to have recourse to great actions.

It was from this connection however, he luckily obtained a recommendation to quit his native country. The Russian service was proposed and embraced. The G——t family knew how very fortunate it might turn out for them, and they were happy to hit on any expedient which promised a restoration of their former felicity. Mr. Semple, therefore, departed for the dominions of the Empress, equipped with those requisites, which were accepted with as much satisfaction on one side, as they were bestowed with good will on the other.

Though it will be necessary here to state that Mrs. Semple is the God-daughter of the celebrated Dutchess of Kingston; yet it need scarcely be told that that great lady is a very great favourite with the still greater Empress of Russia, at which court the first great lady now resides.

To conceive that J. G. Semple would let slip so favourable an opportunity of improving his fortunes, would be but paying a very bad compliment to his penetration. As he knew the alliance, so he knew well how to introduce himself. Mr. Semple was a fine man, the lady had been a fine woman, and is still a great wit; she received him with hospitality, and promised to introduce him to the Empress. The promise of a court lady was never
yet

yet violated. Mr. Semple was introduced, and promised promotion.

But strange was the revolution in the affairs of Mr. Semple.—A something, a destiny which we all are liable to, threw a stumbling block in his way.—The Dutchesse withdrew her favours, the Empress recanted her promise, and Mr. Semple decamped without waiting for the expected promotion.

The great actions that were the spring of this event are recorded in page 95 of these Memoirs.

But although we are not at a loss for so important a circumstance in the life of Mr. Semple; yet we have the pleasure of recording here one small specimen of his ingenuity ere we bring him out of a country which was so unfortunate in his loss. He *borrowed* the passport of the king's messenger, then on his road to England, and by quitting the character of a gentleman, and assuming that which the contents of the passport afforded him, he got safe into Germany, where he talked in the language of the fellow upon Highgate-hill, who bid the Lord Mayor of London kiss his ———.

At Cologne he distinguished himself in a manner no ways derogatory to that assurance which had already made him pretty conspicuous in England and Russia. Whether the incident we are going to relate happened at this, or at a subsequent period,

period, we are not certain; be the time when it will, it makes but a very little difference to the reader. It is a fact, and therefore the order of time totally immaterial.

Baron Hompesch, a German nobleman, was resident at Cologne, when Mr. Semple arrived there, by which the latter had an opportunity of exercising those wits which seemed to have been his only support for some years. He addressed himself to the Baron with all the politeness he was capable of, and that was no small portion. He styled himself a Major in his Britannic Majesty's service, described himself of a noble family in Scotland, and boasted his great intimacy with the first of the English nobility; concluding with his relationship to the lady who had given him so kind a reception at the Court of Petersburg.

Having thus stated his consequence, he then opened his misfortunes.—He had been so unhappy, he said, as to kill two English gentlemen, one at London, the other at Bath, in a duel. From his consequence and misfortunes, he then began to display his legal abilities.—The laws of England, he said, were very severe on the laws of honour, and cruelly deemed that a murder, which the laws of other countries took no cognizance of, and by this cruelty he was compelled to fly for safety to a foreign country.—His mind was exceedingly distressed, but he was much more so by the situation

tion in which his pecuniary affairs then stood; and both those causes emboldened him to seek the support of a nobleman, whose soul was ever awake to the sensations of humanity, particularly when a gentleman and a distressed officer put in his plea to those feelings.

His manner, his appearance, his language, operated effectually on the Baron:---The eye of pity was thrown on so unhappy and so unfortunate a case. The Baron's purse bestowed the most liberal relief, and his house afforded a most comfortable asylum.---The Baron's friendship and services kept pace with the Major's misfortunes; and he promised to use all his interest to get him restored to his native country.

But this extension of friendship was not all that the Major prevailed on the Baron to exert---Mr. Semple wished to return to England with his Majesty's promise of a pardon in case of conviction; for, added he, "As a gentleman, and a man of honour, I must surrender myself up to the laws of the land, and take my trial for the murders."

The Baron, who perhaps better understood the constitution of Germany, and some other northern nations than that of England, and knew that whilst the laws of the land was tying a halter round a man's neck, the monarch was tying round the ribband of some honorary order round his shoulders, readily consented to this request, and assured Mr.

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Semple,

Semple, he would use all his influence to procure the King's previous pardon, as soon as ever he should arrive in England, which would be in the space of two or three months.

To relieve the reader from any suspense which he may be thrown into, by Mr. Semple's narrative of duels he never fought, and of men he never killed, we must let him into a secret which it is not impossible he may have already discovered. The whole tale was an artful deception, trumped up for the mere purpose of living on the Baron's bounty as a man of consequence and fashion, which were always the ambition of James George Semple, Esq. Besides, as he knew that his happy effrontery and external appearance could support the character, so he knew that the only method of carrying his plan into execution, was to put himself upon a level with the Baron. We may be liberal to the poor and base born; but effectual relief and friendship are only extended to our equals.

In this noble state did Major Semple live at Cologne till the time of the Baron's departure for England, when the Major accompanied him, not in his suite, but as a friend and companion. On their arrival, the Baron mentioned the case to some of his Majesty's ministers; by whom he was informed, that the request was impossible to be granted, as all offences here were punished or pardoned

doned according to the merits of the case, and the favourable or aggravating circumstances attending it.

Soon after the Baron's arrival it happened that Count Hompesch, the Baron's son, came from Germany to England with dispatches. After having negotiated his business, he was preparing to return; when the Baron advised Major Semple to accompany him, and he should have his recommendations there. This was readily agreed to, but a little delay proposed, in order to settle his private affairs in England. The Count would have been happy in the Major's company, but submitted to the mortification of sailing without him. His luggage, however, was large, and as it could not be all got together by the time, especially as he purchased many valuable English articles, the Major kindly took charge of the remainder, which by some damn'd accident or other on the road, never got over to Cologne, although as we are informed, it was worth between four and five hundred pounds. It is hardly worth our notice to observe that in a visit to Mr. Richardson, sugar-baker, of Stamford-street, over Black-fryar's bridge, with the Baron, he borrowed five shillings of Mr. Richardson's maid servant for want of change to pay a coach, and forgot to return it.

What became of Mr. Semple immediately after this loss, we are not positive, but we find him at

Dieppe, in about a year afterwards, hiring an English fishing smack, there being no packet boat, for the exprefs purpose of bringing over difpatches to government here, as he declared. For this conveyance he agreed to give fourteen guineas. When he arrived at Harwich, not having cash about him to pay it, and being alfo in want of money to pay the chaise to town, as he told the man, he borrowed fix guineas of him (Mr. Thomas Welsh, living at No. 7, Gun-alley, Wapping) with whom Mr. Semple travelled over the ocean in the name and description of Colonel Crawford.

But a fingular instance of his ingenuity ought not to efcape us. It exhibits his address, and the fertility of his genius too powerfully to be fuppressed.

He applied to Mr. Lovett, ftale-keeper and hackney-man, of Stratton Street, Piccadilly, in order to fend an exprefs down to Lord Salifbury, near Watford. The exprefs was fent, and contained an account of a near relation of her ladyship's and his own alfo, who, Mr. Semple faid, was arrested for three hundred pounds, mentioning the person's name, and that fixty or eighty guineas would compromise the affair. This letter, by the exprefs, was deliyered to his Lordship, as he was riding near the houfe, but to which his Lordship returned this verbal answer, "*That he knew of no fuch person, or relation, and therefore there was no answer.*"

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The obvious meaning of this express was, first to make himself appear a person of consequence and fashion by his connections; and, secondly, upon the strength of it, to get credit of Mr. Lovett. The scheme had its effect. He ran a few pounds into Mr. Lovett's debt; who, having some little knowledge of the world, began to suspect the Major, and then put a *curb* to his credit.

Many and vain were his applications after Mr. Semple for payment. Fortunately he observed him one day in a hackney coach, and the Major, in his turn, discovered Mr. Lovett. He kept himself, like a hare in his form, at the bottom of the coach, whence Mr. Lovett started him by opening the coach door.---Pleas, apologies, and excuses, flowed as freely as the Thames at a spring tide.---His Honour and his Maker he offered as bail for the performance of his promises, but Mr. Lovett would neither take the security, nor part with his game; and swore, wherever the coach went, thither he would go also.

When the Major found that there was no getting rid of his companion, he declared it was hard that he should be compelled to apply personally to his agents for a few pounds; but as necessity had no law, if Mr. Lovett would accompany him to Messrs. Cox and Mair's, in Craig's-Court, Charing-Cross, he would pay him.

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There is no doubt but Mr. Lovett readily consented to the proposal.—They drove to Craig's Court, where he got out of the coach ; and as Mr. Lovett well knew it was no thoroughfare, he continued at the corner of the court, and saw him go into Messrs. Cox and Mair's.

After waiting an hour he began to grow impatient. He enquired at the agents for Major Semple :—They knew no such man :—But the servant maid informed him, that a gentleman, about an hour ago, had been there, and told her he was pursued by bailiffs, and begged her to let him escape through the house by the back door into Scotland-yard, which out of compassion she had done. By this double, Mr. Lovett lost his game, and never got scent again.

But the circle of his ingenuities were not limited to Barons, Counts, Watermen, and Hackney-Coachmen ; the Keepers of Coffee-Houses and Hotels experienced their pleasant effects likewise.

He frequented Wood's hotel, under Covent-Garden Piazza ; and although Mr. Wood has, to our knowledge, too much good sense to be amused by the inventive genius of plausible pretenders, when their artillery is levelled at the purse, yet Major Semple proved an over-match for Mr. Wood's general prudence.

The Major came there one day, and desired to know for how many such a gentleman (the reader must

must excuse our naming him) had ordered dinner?

—Mr. Wood replied, “ He had had no orders.”

—Good God! said the Major, Dick is a sad dog!

How neglectful! Why, Wood, several of us agreed last night to dine with you to-day at seven shillings and sixpence a head, exclusive of wines.

—Get dinner ready at five o'clock for a dozen.

Mr. Wood was retiring to give orders, when the Major called him back:—Here, hark ye, Wood, said he, damme if I am not come out and left my purse on the table:—Lend me six guineas. Mr. Wood lent the money, the Major departed, an elegant dinner was dressed, but neither that sad dog, Dick, nor any of his party, came to partake of it.

We trace him likewise to a lodging at Knightbridge with a Mr. Sadgrove, a hair-dresser there, in the name of Major Harrold. To Mr. Sadgrove's he brought with him an elderly gentleman, whom he was pleased to stile his father, and to dignify with the appellation of Lord Lyfle.—When Mr. Sadgrove apologised for the inconvenience he should be under in accommodating a nobleman—Pshaw, said the Major, put him into my bed, and make up one any how for me.—Thus were the nobleman and his son accommodated, till Mr. Sadgrove began to trouble his lodgers for some of those reasons which make all inconveniencies trifling to the person who submits to them.

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But as Major Harrold was at a loss for that kind of eloquence, and as some few neighbouring tradesmen applied for the same sort of oratory, Mr. Sadgrove's lodgings began to be thought too far from town, and consequently the Major removed, but without giving legal notice thereof.

Many were the searches Mr. Sadgrove made to make him speak properly, but they were fruitless. Having at last traced Major Harrold, Mr. Sadgrove received from him the following curious letter :

Mr. Sadgrove,

I received yesterday from the gentleman who is with me, a letter which you meant for me, but which he opened owing to the address. I assure you that upon my word that before Thursday next I will pay you the money I remain in your debt ; but *I must beg you will not mention that I am in town to any body.* I will call myself at your house and pay you. If I promise you sooner I may not be able to keep my word, but then I assure you I will not *faill*, but *I beg you won't mention having seen me.* Friday afternoon.

P. S. I again assure you that I will not *faill* on Thursday to pay you—*only don't mention that you have seen me.*

Directed to Mr. Sadgrove, Hair-Dresser, No. 10, Gloucester-Row, Knightsbridge.

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The reason of the Major's desiring secrecy is too apparent to need explanation.—But to do him all possible justice, we must add, that he declined putting Sadgrove to any expence about the letter, as Major Harold paid the porter, and indorsed it so.

Having done him that piece of justice, truth obliges us to own, that a German servant who was with him there, [Peter Frankin] he dispatched to Ostend under pretence of preparing lodgings for him there, and who is now at Dusseldorf; having first in cash borrowed, and wages, stood indebted to the poor fellow near upon twenty pounds.

Nor was he less active, during his stay at Knightbridge, among hackney coachmen, than he had been with Mr. Lovett. Under pretence of wanting change, he borrowed of several the paltry sums of ten, of twelve, and fifteen shillings, which he never returned. If, therefore, we compare them and the former circumstance together, we are afraid that we must conclude, that Major Harrold paid Mr. Sadgrove out of a principle of fear, and that he stands still indebted to Peter Frankin, from the principle of never having meant to pay him at all.

We must confess, however, that Mr. Sadgrove's luck was rather singular. Mr. Dalby, of New-Bond-Street, was not quite so fortunate. By the means of a fine carriage, and a fine insinuating tongue, he not only got trifles to the amount of six or seven pounds, but likewise obtained ten pounds in cash.

He did indeed, when he purchased the goods of Mr. Dalby, offer two guineas in part, which he said was all the cash he had about him; but then to take two guineas in part of six from a gen-

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tleman of Major Semple's appearance, Mr. Dalby was afraid might have been considered as ungentle, and perhaps construed into an affront: He therefore politely gave him credit for the whole, and without scruple lent the Major ten pounds more to it.

To Mr. Gladwell, wine-merchant, No. 52, Piccadilly, he introduced himself as Major Semple, and said, he came recommended by the Earl of Kerry.—The purport of the visit to Mr. Gladwell was to purchase some wines, particularly Tent, of which he understood that Mr. Gladwell had some that was very curious, as a present for Lady Coventry, who was most exceedingly fond of Tent wine.—A quantity to a considerable amount was agreed on, and a carter sent in the afternoon to fetch it away; who, on Mr. Gladwell's enquiring, told him, that he had lived with the Major fifteen years, and he was a very worthy honest Gentleman.—The wines were packed up and sent, and the Major came in a day or two to give a second order; but Mr. Gladwell having, from some little enquiry, learnt what was sufficiently satisfactory to him, declined executing it.

In the name of Major Campbell he also paid a visit to Mr. Johnson, wine-merchant, of Bruton-Place, and had the pleasure of drinking that Gentleman's health in some very fine-flavoured Claret and Madeira.

But though his operations were daily directed against tradesmen, yet the nobility likewise were pestered with his impertinent assiduities.

He frequently wrote letters to Lord Salisbury, and Sir Thomas Dundas, in Arlington-street, in the name of Major Campbell, till directions were
given

given by his Lordship and Sir Thomas, neither to admit or receive a letter from him. Defeated thus, he applied to the porter of the latter for the loan of half-a guinea, to pay for the carriage of some goods which were in Piccadilly, brought to town by a stage-waggon, and which he could not send home directly, as he had left his purse on the table.—*Tel maître, tel valet*—the party-coloured tribe ape their masters, and the porter in this case profited by following the Baronet's example.

But though thus defeated at Lord Salisbury's and Sir Thomas Dundas's, his frequent visits there were the occasion of making him some trifling amends in the same street.—Greenwood and Hudson, seedsmen, at the corner of it, from seeing his frequent visits at both houses, made no scruple of giving him credit, in the name of Major George, for several pounds worth of flower seeds, &c. From which we may draw this observation, that James George Semple was like a rabbit in a warren, no sooner out of one hole than he was in at another.

Nor were his dexterities less practised upon the publican than the Peer.—Mr. Henderson, of the Rose and Crown public-house, in the Haymarket, had lived servant with a Captain Cunningham, of the Royals; which, by some means or other, Mr. Semple was acquainted with.—He came therefore one day in a coach to Mr. Henderson, saying he was sent by Captain Cunningham to borrow a guinea, and called himself Captain Maxwell. The guinea was lent, and also two shillings to pay for the coach. Had he upon that occasion asked for ten, he might as easily have obtained it.

Another guinea he obtained of Mr. Carter riding-master, of Chapel-street, Grosvenor-square,

by pretending that officers had been after him to arrest him, and he wanted to escape in a coach.

The same specimen of his abilities, Mr. Lancaster, coachmaker, of Theobald's-Road, experienced, and under the same pretence, but in the name of Major Stewart.

Having taken a lodging at Mr. Lock's, No. 17, Upper Mary-le-Bone-street, where he did not go by any name but that of the Major, Mr. Lock in a short time discovered who his lodger was, and accosted him with a How do you do, Major Semple? The Major moved off rather precipitately, leaving a trunk with a few contents behind him, which just indemnified Mr. Lock. But, as Major Semple had, soon after that march, the honour of making a figure in a public news-paper, we should neither do our Readers nor the Major justice, to let slip so favourable an opportunity of laying before them the following small notice which chance has luckily thrown into our hands.

" IF J. G. Semple, who left his lodgings at
 " Daniel Lock's, No. 17, Upper Marybone-
 " street, near Portland-Chapel, does not fetch the
 " trunk away which he left there, in 14 days from
 " this date, the same will be appraised and sold.

" Witness my hand, DANIEL LOCK."

" May 29, 1786."

It was impossible for us not to avail ourselves of so authentic a document, however trifling; but the more material instances of his abilities, which, like the splendour of an Eastern Bulse, annihilates the faint radiance of a Bristol stone, totally eclipse all such petty efforts of occasional genius.

To

To Mr. Wetton, of Bruton-street, confectioner, he gave a large order for confectionary, which was not executed; but though Mr. Semple failed in that, he was accommodated with half-a-dozen pots of sweetmeats gratis.

The Reader, no doubt, has already seen that no situation in life was too high or too low for Mr. Semple to practise upon. From Baron Hompesch to hackney-coachmen, mankind were alike to him; nay, a poor fellow of the name of Lucas, a porter at the Temple-gate, he condescended to borrow six shillings of to pay a hackney-coachman, under the pretence of having nothing but Bank notes and bills about him.

Nor was Mr. M'Kenzie, of the Rhedarium, Park-lane, more guarded against his enterprises. Of him he obtained a carriage, and the hire of several, by the name of Major Winter. Fortune, however, stood M'Kenzie's friend. The Major having offered it for sale to Mr. Careless, master of the White-Hart, at Watford, who happened to know the carriage and owner, he sent to Mr. M'Kenzie, who came down to Watford, and issued out a *capias* against the Major, commonly known by the name of the Brewer's Ejectment Writ:—The Brewer's Ejectment Writ is this; when publicans don't pay, or are suspected of decamping, or for any other *reasonable cause*, the Brewer sends his men, horses, and drays, very legally breaks open the cellar-door, and very coolly draws away every beer-butt therein. Mr. M'Kenzie, therefore, wisely took the same method; he sent his men and horses, and brought the carriage back to the Rhedarium.

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But although Mr. M'Kenzie was so far fortunate, yet he and Mr. Careless were joint-sufferers by letting horses and carriages out for the Major's use.

Mr. Lycett, of Whitechapel, a coach-maker, was, however, not quite so lucky as Mr. M'Kenzie:—Mr. James George Semple, in the name of J. G. Harrold, of the Hague, obtained of him a carriage to use for a fortnight; for which the Major was to pay Mr. Lycett 5s. per day. The Major sent a pair of horses, which brought it away; and he forgot ever after to pay for the use of, or to return the carriage. Nay, the Major even forgot his way to Whitechapel. How far this little ingenuity comes under the statute of felonies, will be seen hereafter; as the Major was tried for it.*

Mr. Greenfill, silversmith, in the Strand, also experienced the address and dexterity of this singular genius. The Major had, by his usual dexterity, insinuated himself into the opinion of a Gentleman, an Officer in his Majesty's service, a man of honour and honesty, to mention whose name would be cruel as well as indelicate. His own feelings at having been so imposed on, and which was the cause of several tradesmen giving credit to James George Semple, is a circumstance of sufficient mortification, without any additional aggravation of ours.—At Mr. Greenfill's they tossed up for some buckles; and in a few days after, on the strength of his having been in that Gentleman's company, Mr. Greenfill gave him credit for a few pounds worth of silver goods in the name of Major Cunningham. Luckily he obtained no more. Had he desired it, Mr. Green-

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* See the Trial, pages 105 to 116.

fill would readily have credited him for fifty or an hundred pounds.

One general observation we beg leave to make. Wherever Mr. Semple attempted to obtain, or was successful in obtaining either money or goods, the imposition was founded on his real or pretended knowledge of some respectable character who he knew was acquainted with, or was a customer to, the person he applied to, either to borrow cash, or take up goods upon credit.— This artifice was seconded by the deception of his own personal appearance, which, added to the natural plausibility of his language, was as specious and as alluring as the Grand Deceiver's, who, by the *honey-dew* of his tongue, and, as Voltaire says, by the length of a shining tail, imposed on the natural credulity of the first frail fair. This will, once for all, account for his success in that line of Swindling, at which he was so complete an adept, and in some measure apologize for the credulity of those who have been sufferers through his adroitness.

As explanatory of this, we give the following fact:

He lately, and which the Reader will see, with an assurance equal to his artifice, applied himself to Mr. Hankey, of Upper Harley-street, Cavendish-square, although a total stranger, and requested the sum of seventeen or eighteen guineas, which he said he was much in need of, to assist a brother Officer, who was then in custody for debt. To take off a little of the edge of a surprise which such a strange importunity might naturally occasion, he added, that he was a Major in his Majesty's service, and well known to, and intimate

mate with, Mr. Hankey's brother, or he would not have taken such a liberty.

As appearances were for him, Mr. Hankey said, that his brother would be in town that day, and would dine with him at five o'clock, at which time Mr. Semple was desired to call, and actually invited to dinner. To a man of less *nonchalance* than James George Semple, this answer would have been a complete rebuff. But his motto was, "*In for a penny, in for a pound.*" He thanked Mr. Hankey, and boldly accepted the invitation.

At a quarter before five, having called in his out-posts of humour, anecdote, tale, and repartee, and joined them with his main guard, *Impudence*, he knocked at Mr. Hankey's door.—The servants ushered him up stairs, and he was introduced to the Mr. Hankeys. The brother, whom Mr. Semple pretended to be so intimate with, professed he had not the smallest knowledge of him; when our Hero reminded him of this, that, and the other Gentleman, with whom Mr. Hankey had been at such and such places; assured him, that he, Mr. Semple, was often of the party, and lamented much the want of Mr. Hankey's recollection. The servant having announced dinner, they all sat down, and the Major began to file off his out-posts. As his conversation was entertaining, they were in no great hurry to lose their visitor; but when the subject of the visit came on the carpet, as men of business they declined the request.

So far unfortunate, Mr. Semple set his wits to work. A smaller sum, he said, perhaps would do to extricate his friend; and if Mr. Hankey would

would advance him five guineas, on a security of five guineas per annum on the Compassionate List at the Pay-Office, he was ready to give Mr. Hankey a draught on Mr. Thomas, at the Office, who paid the money.

It being a case of some seeming compassion, interwoven with a delicacy in refusing a Gentleman whom they had invited to dinner, Mr. Hankey advanced him the money, and Semple wrote the following letter.

S I R,

Mr. Hankey, of Fenchurch-street, has been kind enough to advance me five guineas on my promise of giving no other order to receive the small pension on the Compassionate List but to him. I declare upon my honour that this is the only obligation I either have or shall give, and that when due to him and no other person—I will send the certificate.

I am, Sir,

London, July 4, With much consideration,
1786.

Your most obedient servant,

J. G. Semple.

Directed to

Mr. Thomas,

Pay-Office,

Whitehall,

London.

F

Now

Now the truth is, he was not, nor ever was, on the Compassionate List.—In fact, Mrs. Semple was.—Nor could he even receive the money for her, unless she was present; for, it being payable to Mrs. Semple, even her certificate, order, or power of attorney, would be no justification of the payment; she must receive it in person; and as Mr. Thomas knows and performs his duty with as much exactness as fidelity, he certainly never would pay Mr. Hankey on any such certificate of Mr. Semple's. We are afraid, therefore, that the consciousness of having done, what Mr. Hankey conceived, a generous act, must be his sole reward.

By contrasting this conduct with the following little specimen of his abilities, the Reader must soon see the different degrees of light and shade in his composition. This same James George Semple, who could introduce himself to Baron Hompesch and Messrs. Hankeys, had been running about the town all day in an hackney-coach, and by stepping into Mr. Francis Sykes's, in South-Audley-square, under a pretended business, he bilked the poor fellow of his whole fare.

In short, the noblemen's houses he frequented daily under this device, made his person as familiar to the great as to the little world. The title of Major became as alarming as the appearance of a wolf at Spa during the winter season, and the doors became equally guarded against his entering them. The comparison holds good, with this degree of difference; the wolf prouls at midnight, Major Semple ravaged at noon-day.

By

By this practice of his, the reader must observe that no character or reputation was safe when a guinea was the object of Mr. Semple.

Should any person be surprised at his success, we beg him to recollect an anecdote of the late celebrated Dr. Rock.

He was standing one day at his door on Ludgate-hill, when a real doctor of physic passed, who had learning and abilities, but whose modesty was the true cause of his poverty: "How comes it," says he to the quack, "that you, without education, without skill, without the least knowledge of the science, are enabled to live in the style you do?—You keep your town-house, your carriage, and your country-house; whilst I, allowed to possess some knowledge, have neither, and can hardly pick up a subsistence!—Why, look ye," said Rock, smiling, "how many people do you think have passed since you asked me the question?"—"Why," answered the doctor, "perhaps a hundred."—"And how many out of that hundred, think you, possess common sense?"—"Possibly one," answered the doctor. "Then," said Rock, "that one comes to you; and I take care to get the other ninety-nine!"

In conformity to that doctrine, Mr. Semple met a repulse in Mr. Clark, saddler, of Great Portland-street. He attempted to obtain two saddles by the name of Major Gray, an American officer; but Mr. Clark, being the one out of the foregoing hundred, declined the trouble of executing the order.

Mr. Cecil, shoe-maker, of Leadenhall-street, was not, however, quite so much on his guard as Mr. Clark. He came to that gentleman in the name of Major Harrold, and ordered two pair of boots and some shoes to be sent to him, by a stage-coach, down to Park Hall, whither he was immediately going. The order was completed, and sent. Two days after, Mr. Cecil's journeyman espied Major Harrold at the Queen's Arms, Newgate-street. The Major was confused, nay he even blushed. He desired the man to make his compliments to his master, and tell him that he would call and pay him in a day or two, and begged that the man would not mention his seeing him to any body else, as he was in town on very particular and private business.

At Messieurs Dixon and Co. of Aldgate, shoe-makers, he played the same game as he had done with Mr. Cecil; but with these gentlemen he found the name of Semple inconvenient, and therefore assumed that of Major Kennedy.

In the name of Major Grant (pretending that he came from Petersburg on an embassy to this court, and that he had business with Mr. Pitt) he had the same success with Mr. Stewart, perfumer, Broad street, and obtained articles of perfumery to a degree that enabled him to completely stock the toilette of a fine gentleman; for which the Major now stands indicted. And to sweeten his tooth, as well as his person, he applied to Mr. Andrews, of Wimpole-street, fruiterer, and was no less successful in the name of Major Stewart.

Innkeepers

Innkeepers also, as well as keepers of hotels and coffee-houses, experienced his usual diligence. Of Mr. Bolton of the Saracen's-Head, Aldgate, he borrowed two guineas in the name of J. G. Harrold, Esquire; which when he borrowed under the pretence of wanting cash to discharge some hackney-coach hire and charges for the carriage of goods, he wrote the above name in Mr. Bolton's book. On receiving the cash, the Major took the pen and defaced it, saying it was too trifling a sum for *his* name to remain in a book about. It however remains clear to be seen; and it is equally clear, that, trifling as the sum was, it still remains unpaid.

We have already stated that he obtained a carriage of Mr. Lycett, of White-Chapel, coach-maker. But as a horse to ride is of no use without a saddle, so a carriage is of no use without horses to draw it. For this purpose he applied to Mr. Tatterfall, of Hyde-Park Corner, and purchased two horses, for which he gave a draught on Drummonds. The value of that draught the reader may readily guess. It was not worth the five guineas Mr. Tatterfall lent him; for Major Semple had not at that time any loose cash about him, and he had also once more unfortunately left his purse on the table. The great convenience of these horses was to draw away Mr. Lycett's carriage; and for a few days Major Semple lived in as splendid a style as if he had been on full pay.

Nor did Mr. Fozard, stable-keeper, of Park-Lane, escape the Major's observation. Under pretence of extensive acquaintances and high connections, he obtained some credit, and borrowed
a soli-

a solitary guinea, which he was reduced to, he said, by losing his purse by an accidental fall from his horse. But Mr. Fozard having taken some little pains to satisfy himself about the Major, they were the means of producing the following letter from him.

*I am Cursedly persecuted for the few things that I owe, which all together, even including yours, don't make forty pounds, the money I have spent since I have been in Town prevents me from having it in my power to Apply for any more. There is yet a good sum due me, which I shall certainly receive before the end of the week or thereabouts, and even this day if I durst come up to Town I was to have had paid me a small sum which is sufficient to clear me of your debt. I came yesterday down here where I mean to remain till I have satisfied the demands that are against me, an acquaintance who comes to London this day will deliver you this, he I hope will also receive the money for me, I expected. I beg it of you to be assured that I will pay you, the time is now drawing near on which I promised to pay every thing, sure no man was ever so much talked of or teased for so trifling a debt as mine are, there has been more pains took to hurt me, than ever there was any man. I can prove having spent and paid above 300l. in the first 2 or 3 weeks of my arrivall in London and what I owe as I told you before wont make 40l. the noise they have made has prevented them from being paid for they hurted my credit so much, that I am afraid to ask any body to assist me, I could easily have borrowed more money than would have cleared me if they had let me alone Mr. Dalby certainly was very kind to me at first but he talked a great deal afterward; however the assistance he gave me I shall
never*

never forget and most undoubtedly will pay him. I think I can trust to your not taking there example and you may be assured that I will pay you

I am Sir

*Your most Obedient
Servant*

*Monday Morning 8 oClock
Woolwich.*

J. G. SEMPLE.

PRAY DONT MENTION WHERE I AM.

Directed to Mr. Fozard.

The reader need not be reminded that this letter was not written at Woolwich, for the Major was then in the Spring-Garden coffee-house.

In one of his exploits, however, there seems to have been a momentary impulse of generous honesty. He had been rattling about the town, as usual, in an hackney-coach, and had, as usual, bilked the coachman, by leaving him and the coach in waiting in Windmill-street, near the Haymarket. He called at Mr. Skillern's music-shop, in St. Martin's Lane, the corner of St. Martin's church-yard, and begged Mr. Skillern would send up his man to tell the coachman not to wait, but to call the next day at Mr. Skillern's at two o'clock, and the money should be left for him. Mr. Skillern, although a stranger to the Major, (nor could he recollect him, notwithstanding the latter wanted to persuade him he had been a great customer) sent his man up, during which time Major Semple explained the reason by saying, He was pursued by bailiffs, and could not return to the coach. The coachman certainly called; but the above seeming momentary impulse of generous honesty never again influenced the breast of the Major.

A similar

A similar instance of his ingenuity he had practised on another coachman, who was more fortunate than his preceding brother-whip. He happened afterwards to meet Major Semple as he was driving his hackney-coach up Bedford-Row, in company with another gentleman, who, on the coachman's jumping off the box, thought proper to decamp. Having brushed up to the Major, and being determined not to quit him, the latter went to several houses in the neighbourhood to borrow the sum of 1*l*. 13*s*. but was so unfortunate as not to succeed. His wits, however, being pushed hard, he bethought himself of Mrs. Watson, a lady who lives in Gloucester-street, No. 42 : thither he and the coachman went. He recollected that Lord Verney had lodged there. To this lady he applied, under the sanction of being his Lordship's friend, and having visited him there, for the above sum to discharge the demand : he promised the coachman at first to call the next day at Mrs. Watson's to leave the money ; but this promise not being deemed satisfactory, and offering to go, the coachman resolutely (how legally is another thing) locked Mrs. Watson's door upon, and swore the Major should not march without he was paid. Mrs. Watson, seeing the gentleman thus distressed, promised to pay it the next day if the Major did not. The coachman was satisfied, and departed ; as did the Major, with every promise and every apology he could suggest. Apologies and promises cost him nothing. He never returned ; and Mrs. Watson was summoned by the coachman to the court of requests ; and, rather than appear at such a reputable

table and critical appendage to law and justice, she paid the debt.

Hitherto we have treated our readers with a few of his ingenious devices in the metropolis. His abilities, however, were not so circumscribed as to be confined to one scene of action. The country experienced his exploits in a manner no less diffusive than in town. The two following we select.

Having been obliged to a recess from a very laborious season of public business, he took an excursion Northward. At Leicester he put up at the sign of the Three Crowns, kept by Mr. Bishop. Under the stale pretence of having left his pocket-book in town, he was, he said, unfortunately without cash to pursue his journey to Derby. Mr. Bishop, taking Mr. Semple for what he really was not, viz. a gentleman, generously accommodated the unfortunate traveller with five guineas, in order to enable him to pursue his journey to Derby, for which Major Semple as freely gave Mr. Bishop the following valuable security.

Leicester, Aug. 15th, 1785.

£. 5 : 5 : 0

At sight please to pay to Messrs. Coare and Swayne, or Order, the sum of Five Guineas, which you will place to my account.

WM. BISHOP.

Acceptd J. G. SEMPLE

*To J. G. Semple Esquire
Spring Garden Coffee House,
London.*

£

Had

Had the above acceptance been duly honoured, we never should have had the opportunity of taking a copy of it. We shall therefore dismiss this piece of ingenuity with observing, that the Major's expences at Mr. Bishop's (for he lived in some style) arose to as much as the draught, both which were satisfied much in the same way.

But, having travelled with the Major to Leicester, we beg the reader will march with us a little farther; and at Matlock in Derbyshire we will indulge ourselves with a halt.

At Matlock Mr. Semple found it convenient to stay a few days, during which time he ingratiated himself into the company of several gentlemen; two of whom he knew, and on whom the Major exerted the utmost efforts of his avocations.

He soon scraped an acquaintance with a Mr. T——, a gentleman who lives in town; and having found out, as Scrub says, who he was, where he came from, and whither he was going, the Major opened his battery. He talked of his great services to government, his intimacy with the gentleman who is now the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Pitt; produced a letter of that gentleman's to him; and, in short, conveyed into the mind of Mr. T. so high an opinion of his rank and consequence, that on his request Mr. T. readily accommodated him with ten guineas: but what the pretence was by which he obtained it we have forgot.

We have given the reader a short bait at Matlock, and now beg leave to conduct him back to Leicester, where the Major declined troubling Mr. Bishop. Perhaps he thought that a free horse
ought

ought not to be rode to death ; and therefore he put up at Mr. Allamand's, the Three Cranes, where Mr. Semple appeared as great a gentleman as he had done at Mr. Bishop's, and where Mr. Allamand treated him with equal civility.

From Leicester the Major came to town ; and as during his stay at Matlock he had been industrious in cultivating those acquaintances which were most likely to add to his respect and interest, so on his arrival here he was equally active in improving those two material circumstances in life.

Mr. R. a respectable bookfeller of New Bondstreet, under the recommendation and acquaintance which Major Semple assumed with a gentleman, (whom he had honoured with his company in Germany, and thereby discovered that he dealt with Mr. R.) lent him several guineas at different times for an equal number of ducats, which said ducats the Major left in pledge with Mr. R. but quite forgot ever to redeem.

Under a similar pretence he visited Mr. Jameson, bookfeller, of the Strand, in the name of Major Cunningham ; and left behind him, recorded in black and white, a fact that reflects equal honour on his dexterity.

At Mr. Banfield's, woollen-draper, No. 444, Strand, the Major also gave proofs of his singular abilities, by gaining credit for cloth for liveries, &c. &c. And Mr. Chowles, hatter, in Duke-street, Portland-street, behind Portland Chapel, on the 5th of July last, was kind enough to leave a hat at the bar of George's Coffee-house, for the Major's use, directed for J. Wilson, Esq. to

which was added—Pay nineteen shillings. When the Major's hand was in, he might have written nineteen pounds : it would have made no difference to Mr. Chowles. But, as

‘ There is a tide, in the affairs of men,
 ‘ Which, taken at the flood, leads on to FORTUNE ;’

so James George Semple, Esq. panting after the favours of so fickle a goddess, nobly plunged himself at last into the full tide, which safely conducted him into port ; *id est*, his Majesty's jail of Newgate, from whence that said FORTUNE has so often dangled many a great man into eternity, with all the honours due to the important services which he had so bravely lavished on his king and country. In plain English, the Major visited Mr. Feltham, hatter, in Fleet-street, in February last ; and in the following manner, as it appeared before the Lord Mayor, conferred the same favour on that gentleman he had so liberally bestowed on many others. He called at Mr. Feltham's, in a chariot, attended by two footmen ; and, after informing Mr. Feltham of his having been recommended to him by Mr. Richardson, who he understood was his particular friend, he then produced a lady's riding-hat as a pattern for Mr. F. at the same time ordering him to make two of the same kind with all possible expedition, as he intended to take them to Russia, and at that time told Mr. F. that he was a Major in the Russian army.

Mr. F——, perceiving that the pattern which the Major had was made by him, agreeable to directions from Mr. Richardson, for Baron Hompesch,

pefch, a fhort time before, was fatisfied that every
 thing the fupposed Major had uttered was founded
 in truth. The Major, after giving his direftions
 to Mr. F——, went away, returned the next day
 in a hackney-coach, and at going requested his
 man to call another coach. Mr. F——, at this,
 expreffed his furprife at his changing coaches,
 obferving to him, that, in confequence of the late
 regulation for hackney-coaches, it muft become
 very expenfive. The other faid, he felt it rather
 an *uneafy* one, and had a glafs in the back,
 which was difagreeable to him. Another coach
 was then called, and the prifoner departed. That
 the next day he called again, urged the finifhing
 of the two ladies hats, paid Mr. F—— fome
 compliments on his fuperior ftyle of cocking, and
 befpoke one for his own wear: he then told Mr.
 F. that he had a bill on a merchant in the city for
 a hundred pounds, and that he would then go
 and receive it. Mr. F. asked to fee the bill, as in
 all probability he could direft him to the houfe,
 which would fave the trouble of enquiring elfe-
 where: this he however declined, and departed.
 The next day he called again, faid he had juft
 arrived in his brother's carriage from the country;
 but that being drove at an immoderate rate up to
 town, and being obliged to return to dinner,
 would be under the neceffity of hiring poft-
 horfes, as he could not think of harraffing his
 brother's; and requested Mr. F. to lend him three
 guineas in gold, and half a guinea in filver, for
 the convenience of paying the turnpikes. Mr. F.
 having light gold in his pockets, and apprehen-
 five of its caufing difappointment to the Major,
 borrowed

borrowed three new guineas from his next-door neighbour; which, with half a guinea in silver, he gave to the prisoner. On the Major's quitting the shop, a person at the door asked Mr. F. if he knew him; and, on answering in the affirmative, was told by the stranger that he was mistaken; that he was Semple, the notorious sharper; but refused Mr. F. the power of making use of his name, which prevented Mr. F. from pursuing him at that time. Being however somewhat alarmed, he went to his friend Mr. Richardson, who he imagined had recommended him; that Mr. Richardson denied ever having done so, and declared he would not trust him for a guinea, as he attempted to take him in for 40l. He then referred Mr. F. to Mr. G. of the Temple, who confirmed Mr. R.'s account of the prisoner, and recounted many other fraudulent acts of which he had been guilty. That from that time (Feb. 22) Mr. F. considered himself bound, by an indispensable obligation, to bring to public justice a man who could, without remorse, make a profession of distressing the unwary; and that from that time he had taken every possible means of apprehending the prisoner, which, by his steady perseverance, had at length proved effectual. That, in the course of his inquiries after the Major, he had been able to trace out some of the most nefarious acts that ever disgraced an individual. Having some time ago received intelligence of his haunts, he procured a warrant; and, after being repeatedly disappointed in apprehending him, as he was passing through Cheapside, perceiving a coach answering the description of that
used

used by Semple, he instantly called to the driver to stop, but without effect: he then pursued the carriage, and after a long chase attempted to leap in at the window; upon which the coachman stopped, and the Major escaped out of the opposite side. Mr. F. pursued. The Major then took shelter in a banker's shop, where he remained till the arrival of the officers from Bow-street, who conducted him in safety to Mr. Addington, who transmitted him to the Lord Mayor of London for examination.

So eminent a gentleman being committed to prison, he soon became the topic of every company; and the public prints were equally as industrious to propagate his fame, as the world at large had been. We have selected the following, as it leads to a very curious reply of Mr. Semple's.

MORNING POST.

Mr. Feltham, who has spiritedly stepped forward to curb the industrious hero Major Semple in his career, assigned to the Lord Mayor, as reasons for a second examination, that several other charges of the same nature, more forcible than his, could be produced. Above 120 persons attended, who proposed to prove a multitude of similar facts against the prisoner; but the Lord Mayor decided against the necessity of their appearance, as the case of Mr. F. was sufficiently strong in itself to support a prosecution, and ensure the penalties of the law to the offender. His Lordship expressed his thanks to Mr. F. for the spirit he shewed in following up the delinquent. The groupe who suffered by the artifices of this genius, recited
many

many and various exploits which peculiarly distinguished his ingenuity. Among several, he contrived to swindle to a town in Derbyshire, by *taking in* one side of the road on his departure, and the other on his return; in which he succeeded. He at another time assumed the character of an ambassador to the court of Russia, and nearly ruined an unfortunate taylor, who prepared for him a wardrobe to near the value of 400l. a considerable part of which was delivered. He travelled to Russia, whence the effects of his genius forced him to make a precipitate retreat to Sweden; from the capital of which his quarters were also beat up. In Flanders he succeeded upon the credulity of the public; and Calais did not escape the effects of his industry.

He is married into a family who are far from deserving the consequences of such a connection. He has a wife whose character is irreproachable, by whom he had two children: he abandoned her, and took up with an unhappy woman, whom he has brought to ruin.

The ANSWER.

To the PRINTER of the MORNING CHRONICLE.

“ SIR,

“ I am too sensible of the difficulty of vindicating my character to make the attempt; yet I would willingly shew to the public, through the channel of your unbiassed paper, that I am grossly injured,
and

and that nothing can authorize the assertions which have appeared in the public prints, but the unhappy situation into which my follies (to give them no feverer a name) have thrown me. Mr. F——, as yet the only person bound over to prosecute, has not hesitated to do his utmost to hurt me. He occasioned my appearing a second time at Guildhall, under the pretence of having twenty-three people to appear against me; but on calling over their names, two only were to be found. The whole of Mr. F——'s conduct towards me has been marked; during the examination of Mr. D. Shoemaker, (who could not make any story out) he went so far as to call to him in the presence of the whole court, "Don't you remember what you said to me this morning?" I remarked that circumstance immediately to the Lord Mayor; and, I believe, it had a proper effect.

"The papers have been filled with many different charges against me: the impossibility of answering them must be visible to every body; I reserve them for another occasion. Sometime ago a story, without any ground whatever, was fabricated, about my personating a certain noble Marquis, and swindling two maiden sisters out of their whole fortune, 1500l. This story, groundless as it was, and contradicted with authority, has again been repeated. It is also asserted, that I have nearly

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ruined

ruined a taylor, by assuming the character of an ambassador to the court of Russia, and obtaining from him cloaths to the amount of 400l. May I beg to know the name of this taylor? and if the person who gave the intelligence is not, from motives of fear or shame, obliged to conceal his, I should be glad to be indulged with it. It is also said, that I was obliged to make a precipitate retreat from the capital of Sweden: in answer to this, I can only say, that I have been in almost every capital in Europe; the capital of Sweden I never was in during my life, and, as I have said before, it is almost the only one.

“ I cannot suppose any other reason for filling the papers with these groundless charges against me, but the malicious intention of injuring me in the eyes of those who have some friendship for me, and the still more wicked one of prejudicing the judges and jury against me. I am sorry to confess, there are people who may with reason complain of me; Mr. F—— certainly with truth cannot. I declare I will do my endeavours to settle as soon as possible all the demands against me.

“ I ought not to finish this without taking particular notice of the very humane treatment I have received from the Lord Mayor: the kind attentions of Mr. Miller, the city marshal, merit my warmest acknowledgments. Since my confinement I
have

have received every indulgence that the keeper of the prison can with propriety give me.

I am, SIR,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

July, 18, 1786.

J. G. SEMPLE."

To comment upon this would be making a parade of logical abilities, and a waste of pen, ink, and paper. It was our duty to give it because the *audi alteram partem* ought never to be departed from. One observation only we beg leave to make: the Major acknowledges having been in almost every court in Europe but that of Sweden, and that court he denies ever having been in. Mark the position; and then what, from his own assertion, is the natural conclusion? Why, that the *precipitate retreat* was not from Sweden, but from some other court in Europe; most of which he allows he has been at. When great men commit blunders, they are sure to be monstrous ones. Had Major, or James George Semple, Esq. or Mr. Semple, made no answer, it would have afforded no room to litigate his literary abilities. Had Petersburg been substituted for Copenhagen, the Major must have been mute.

But being now in *salva custodia*, and the Major left to his private meditations, we must beg the reader to drop him till the period of his appearance at the bar of the Old Bailey, which was on Tues-

day the 24th of July last; where he made his *entré*, with the Turnkey of Newgate on one side, and a certain knight of the post, vulgarly called Jack Ketch, on the other, to answer a charge made by Mr. Lycett; vide page 27.

The Major bowed to the court—he bowed to the jury—he bowed to the audience—three bows.—His honourable attendants, by the power of sensitive sympathy, bowed also—They felt the force of attraction in—the neck. Whilst they bowed, a side-glance of commiseration darted on the Major, who blushed full as much as a modern made peer when introduced by two of his friends, at the bar of a still greater assembly, with all his blushing honours about him.

He marched majestically forward—He was called on to—hold up his hand! Degrading humiliation! Nothing moves one so much as a great man in distress! He was insulted with all the insolence of official interrogation, and asked, “*How say you, JAMES GEORGE HARROLD, otherwise SEMPLE, otherwise KENNEDY; are you GUILTY of this FELONY of which you stand indicted, or not GUILTY?*” Any answer to such a question, put to such a gentleman, would have been a derogation of character: nay, so truly pitiable was his situation, that it—moved the court; for, as Aristophanes says, in his *Devil upon Two Sticks*—“Up started little Belzy in the form of an able practitioner,” and said—

He

He humbly conceived that his client could not answer the question; and by a delicate turn relieved the Major from the most poignant distress. This *delicate turn* was, A FLAW in the Indictment. This he prefaced with an observation, That it was his own wish, it was the wish of his client, to meet the indictment upon the merits; and not to avail themselves of any legal inaccuracies. But from the complexion of this prosecution, or rather persecution, he thought it his duty to lay hold of every opportunity which could operate to Mr. Semple's advantage, (his counsel in this introductory address dropt the title of Major) and therefore he took an exception to the indictment. This objection, he said, was founded upon stat. 1. Hen. 5th, c. 5, which enacts, that in all Indictments, the party indicted should be described in the Indictment, with proper additions; and he cited Hales P. Crown, B. ii. ch. 25, sec. 70.

He also argued, that this being an indictment for felony, it is a fatal fault to apply the addition to the name which comes under the *alias dictus* only, and not to the first name, though it is not material whether any addition be put to the name which comes under the *alias dictus* or not, because what is so expressed is not material; but it is so great an error to omit an addition to his first name, that where several are indicted, such an omission, in respect to one of them, vitiates the Indictment

as

as to all: 1 Bullstrode 183, 2 Leonard 183, Cro. Eliz. 583, Dyer 88.

He relied strongly on Hooper's case, 2 Leon. 183; and cited several other authorities.

The judge, Mr. Recorder, observed, that the modern practice was uniformly contrary to the cases cited, but allowed the legality of the objection.

His counsel contended, that allowing the practice to be so, the Court ought to over-rule it, on its being shewn to be contrary to law.

Mr. Recorder admitted the practice to be against the objection; but thought the proper mode of objection would have been by plea in abatement or demurrer.

His counsel again contended, that where there was a wrong addition, the proper mode of taking advantage of it was by plea in abatement, where there was no addition, or the objection appeared upon the face of the Indictment, and in the present case, the addition being to the *alias dictus* only, therefore no addition, the proper mode of objecting was by exception.

He further contended, that if a word of substance be omitted in the Indictment, the whole Indictment is bad; but it is otherwise where a word of form is omitted, or there is an omission of an anonymous word when the sense is the same. 2 Hawk. 246.

The

The King v. Wheelhouse, *Popham* 208. An Indictment for frequenting a bawdy-house, and Serjeant Crawley moved to quash it as insufficient; and among many other objections said, the Indictment stated that the defendant was *notivagus*, and it did not say that he was a suspicious night-walker. But Dodridge and Whitlock J. over-ruled this objection, and the defendant received judgment. *Hilary*, 2 Car. King's Bench; and it was determined in Willow's case, *Latch* 173.

Under all these considerations he moved the court to quash the indictment.

The Recorder thought the objection was well founded, and ordered that the indictment should be quashed accordingly.

In plain English, and to make this recital intelligible to men of common sense, as well as to lawyers, let it be understood, that the prisoner, (we beg the Major's pardon) was indicted thus:

The jurors for our Lord the King, on their oath present, That JAMES GEORGE HARROLD, *otherwise* SEMPLE, *otherwise* KENNEDY, &c. &c. &c. whereas in truth and in fact it ought to have ran thus:

The jurors for our Lord the King, on their oath present, That JAMES GEORGE SEMPLE, otherwise HARROLD, otherwise KENNEDY, &c. &c. &c. because his real name being SEMPLE, that name ought to have taken the lead, and the Alias's, like so many other
horses

horses that have started for the *King's plate*, been whipped in for the sweepstakes only.

But his counsel having been successful in this motion, made another, which unfortunately failed. The indictment having, by order of court, been quashed, he moved that Mr. Semple be DISCHARGED. The Recorder, however, demurred to this motion, by saying, That on discussing the *form* of an indictment, the court never go into the *merits*; that as a grand jury had thought proper to say the prisoner had been guilty of felony, it would be a breach of duty in the court to suffer him to go at large till that question was tried.

He therefore ordered Major Semple to be taken thence to the place from whence he came, and to be detained in his Majesty jail of Newgate till the next sessions, when the prosecutor might have an opportunity of preferring a fresh bill, and then alter the form of the indictment.

It was *hinted* besides, that there were several other indictments against him for *frauds*, which were of themselves strong enough to detain him.

The counsel then observed that he should advise his client to plead and take his trial; but after some consideration, that intention was dropped, and the Major taken from the bar, bowing three times as he retired.

We ought here to observe, that we cannot possibly mean any the most distant reflection on the gentleman

tleman who was Major Semple's counsel, Mr. Agar, by adopting the term "*Little Belzy*." It would hurt us, not a little, should he so conceive it. We know his liberality of sentiment, and that he will readily pardon a little of the Old Bailey wit. Indeed, to do him justice, he distinguished himself much to his credit, and with a modesty that discovered as much the characteristics of a gentleman, as with a learning that displayed his abilities as a lawyer. We know his manners in private life to be amiable; and we have no doubt, by application, he will very soon be an equal ornament to his profession as he is already to society.

Disappointed, therefore, in concluding the life of Major Semple with his trial *now*; the recess has afforded us an opportunity of making the delay agreeable, by treating our readers in the mean time with a few more anecdotes.

From the circumstance of Baron Hompesch having introduced him to Mr. Chancellor Pitt, Mr. Semple struck out a line of ingenuity which seldom or never failed of success. He took the freedom, as one gentleman might readily do with another, of writing to Mr. Pitt; and in one of these letters hinted a scheme which, he said, would be serviceable to the kingdom, desiring to know when Mr. Pitt would do him the honour of an audience.

Having obtained answers, which was all that Mr. Semple thought necessary for the good of his country, he took that natural advantage of it,

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which

which less ambitious minds might be excused for. He boasted of his acquaintance and intimacy with Mr. Pitt, readily shewed his letters, and also letters from Dr. Prettyman, and made himself of that consequence which he knew the weaker part of the world readily bowed down to.

The first instance we have on record of his making use of his correspondence, is on the 19th of December, in the year 1785, at Doncaster in Yorkshire.—We have not learnt the particulars how he got there, whether it was in a journey to Scotland or from it; nor how he introduced himself to the gentleman who gave credit to that correspondence: but the fact is, he did introduce himself, and the introduction answered his then purpose. The ingenious tale too, which he fabricated to complete his purpose, we are also strangers to; but the following letter, which a very fortunate accident put into our possession, exhibits so very pleasing and humorous a picture, and is also accompanied with such a sarcastic turn, that we insert it *litera scriptis*, as the best explanation of our gentleman's address.

S I R

Doncaster July 20th 1786
Yorkshire

IT was my intention in April last to have done myself the Honor of paying my respects to you or to have attempted it at W B Blands Esq^r N^o 24 queen Anns Street West London—But truly as you say by your address

dress to the publick in the Morning Chronicle of 17th
dated 15 instant

Various Acc^{ts} then circulating—made me defer adding trouble to my so readily being duped by you the 19th Dec^r 1785—For 7½ Guineas

“ You confess there are people who may with reason complain, of you, And do add “ I declare I will do my endeavor to settle as soon as possible all the demands against me.” Wou’d it was known to this House *Elison Cooke & Co* when to expect it. Can you remember all that pass’d—And where the James Semple poisoned himself! who I mention’d to you had Swindled me in 1777—Its a long time since—Forgive me if I trouble you with some more particulars of this Last matter *James Semple* (so like your writing I’ve no doubt the very same person as wrote J G Semple) “ York 24 Oct^r 1777 pay *Mr Tho^s Swan* 5 G^{as} address’d to Mr. Veach Mer^t Broad Street Golden Square London” When this made its way to Town the Acc^t was Mr Swann was Swindled—Don’t you think such Villains deserve Hanging Mr Semple? May all such only meet their deserts—And *some Folks* might not have had the trouble to live so long—as ever to experience any disagreeable trial to pay debts—so long dishonorably contracted—Judge you by the enclos’d—And at least if not for both or *all three* *Se i mples*! not forgetting your very serious promise *Words* in dec^r Last do something worthy yourself and my advertising you in the Morning Chronicle, or any paper you chuse—That you have discharged the 5 & 7 Guineas & ½ at our Bankers Mess^{rs} R & F Gosling you may remember you took their names down in december Last—You may depend upon my doing every generous act towards you in return—But as I greatly fear the pleasing side—for myself—Will not do that to myself—I truly wish every VILLAIN had administer’d to him—Twelve Guineas

& $\frac{1}{2}$ payment wou'd be more agreeable to receive than to join in the prosecuting the once so Intimate Friend of our GREAT Mr Pit & his secretary Mr Smith — But wch I shall have a pleasure in doing—If your Friends want help who have got you into such obligations as you express to the Lord Mayor and City Marshall.

My name already you have herein.

It appears, by the foregoing letter, that a Mr. Semple had paid his respects to the gentleman nine years ago; and, by the present Mr. Semple's account, had poisoned himself. What the gentleman's opinion was of the two Sofia's may be easily gueffed by his interrogation, *Don't you think such villains deserve hanging, Mr. Semple?*

It must be also observed, that although the gentleman gave himself the trouble of addressing Mr. Semple on the subject, which is easily seen was since his unlucky confinement, such address was not the result of any the most distant idea of being refunded the foregoing sum, but from the pleasing satisfaction of reminding Mr. Semple that the matter was not totally forgot, and that he was not entirely a stranger to his present place of abode.

Indeed, the gentleman's good wishes towards Mr. Semple are by no means so favourable as his calamitous circumstances may require, as he promises him, if his friends want help, he shall have a pleasure in assisting them.

We have hitherto traced Mr. Semple's abilities
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in preying upon the purses of his friends; but that qualification was infinitely inferior to his merit in preying upon the peace of mind and happiness of two gentlemen, who had the honour of his acquaintance.

It has been noticed already that he made his application to Baron Hompesch on the ground of having fought two duels himself, and killed both his men; but he was more fortunate in the following event.

When he was at Spa, there happened to be a quarrel between two real gentlemen, with whom Mr. Semple associated; and he was the go-between in the dispute. To each party, though he undertook the office of a mediator, he aggravated the expressions of the one, and thereby inflamed the mind of the other. This diversion of Mr. Semple's produced a duel; and the consequence was, that one of his friends was wounded: but when a reconciliation and explanation ensued, Mr. Semple thought proper, in order to avoid manual chastisement, to abdicate the place.

Mr. Semple was also in November 1785, at Manchester, and had introduced himself to several gentlemen as the confidential and bosom friend of Mr. Pitt, Dr. Prettyman, Mr. Rose, Mr. Lepine, and others who have the management of the various departments of his Majesty's treasury. By producing of some letters, which he had artfully obtained from
some

some of those gentlemen, he had made himself a man of no small consequence in that country. But his application to Thomas Butterworth Bayley, Esq. of the Hope, near Manchester, who is in the commission of the peace for that county, likewise a gentleman of independent fortune, and, what is still far superior, a most respectable character, was founded on another claim.

Mr. Semple introduced himself to that gentleman as a relation of the noble family of Lord Semple, of Scotland, with whom he knew Mr. Bayley and his father had been acquainted, and even connected; and, to induce him to believe he was the person he represented himself, he exhibited treasury letters from different persons in that department; his plea of wanting money was, that having been a long journey on a matrimonial excursion with a young lady of great fortune from the west of England to Dover, and from thence to Gretna-Green, in Scotland, his cash was expended. The sum Mr. Bayley lent him was fifteen guineas (not twenty-five pounds, as related in the former editions) for which he gave excellent security, his note. Mr. Bayley considering this as a fraud, wrote to Sir Sampson Wright on the subject, who was very active in his endeavours to have him apprehended.

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We hardly need say, that the note was never redeemed; but when Mr. Semple had the honour of being conducted to the domicile of our sovereign lord the king, and to cut so conspicuous a figure in our public prints, Mr. Bayley by that means discovering the Major's abode, indorsed the note over to Sir Sampson, who has been so unkind as to lodge a detainer against Mr. Semple in the shape and form of an uncivil action.

Now, though the foregoing sum of money, thus borrowed of Mr. Bayley, was obtained in a manner that most assuredly comes under the 30th of Geo. 2, and is clearly and unequivocally a fraud, if the pretence made use of by Mr. Semple could be proved false; yet the *onus probandi* being thrown by law on Mr. Bayley, it would be next to impossible for him to prove that the Major had not left his pocket-book behind him, that he had not expended all his cash, and that he was not going on a matrimonial expedition to Scotland to be united to a lady of large fortune.

Mr. Bayley, therefore, not being able to prove the *negative*, it was out of his power to put the Major to the trouble of proving the *affirmative*; (two words, by the bye, on which are founded every legal pursuit, and every species of art and chicanery in the prosecution of it) he took the only remedy he had to try to recover his property; and no doubt very reluctantly, for we have every rea-
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son to think, that had Mr. Bayley had it in his power to have proceeded otherwise, he would gladly have relinquished the prosecution in the shape of a *debt*, and done justice to his country by adopting a prosecution for a *fraud*.

We are in possession also of another, but a still more ingenious, adventure of his, in an excursion from the north to town. He came to an inn on the road in a post-chaise; and it being about two o'clock, P. M. he said it was too soon for dinner, but whilst the landlord was roasting a fowl, he would amuse himself by viewing the church, &c.

The fowl was accordingly spitted; but it happening that the boy who drove Mr. Semple to the above inn, had a sweetheart in the same place, he left his horses to the care of the hostler, whilst he went to pay his respects to his *Dulcinea*, at the farther end of the town.

As the driver was standing at the door talking with the lady, he saw a post-chaise coming along; and having the curiosity to see who was therein, was very much surpris'd to find the gentleman he had just sat down at one inn, in a post-chaise belonging to another. But what appeared still more surprizing was, he had not received his master's fare; and, what was still worse, his own customary compliment. It was in vain for the Major to draw back and secrete himself. The boy ran back to the inn, and told the circumstance, when the master ordered two horses to be saddled; and, at the end of

two stages, the landlord and boy accosted Mr. Semple very rudely indeed, and insisted on his going before a magistrate.

When they arrived at his worship's, the complaint was formally laid; and the Major being asked what he had to say for himself, he ran through his lineage and history, even from the year 1547, when the title of Lord Viscount Lisle became extinct, to the very hour in which he was bade to tell it; leaving out all the hair-breadth escapes, disasters, chances, &c.

Having done this, with his usual audacity and with equal hauteur he harangued on his importance to government. He declared himself the bosom friend of Mr. Pitt; said he was on his Majesty's service with expresses of the most important and serious nature to this kingdom; that he had exhausted all his cash; that he would compel every innkeeper on the road to furnish him with horses and chaise; and dared the magistrate or landlord to molest or detain him.

The authoritative stile and manner in which he delivered himself, and the production of his *corps de reserve*, Mr. Pitt's letters, produced an effect, that not only answered his utmost purpose, but produced more, much more, than Mr. Semple expected.

The magistrate, whose good wishes towards government greatly inclined him to favour every thing that had the least smack of it, was determined not to put a spoke into the wheels of it. He took

Mr. Semple, therefore, into his private room, and not only told him he would pay the chaise, but actually offered him a sufficient sum of money to enable him to come to town; which offer the Major accepted, with a profusion of acknowledgments, and pursued his journey. And thus ended an exploit, which we dismiss without a comment. One fact we must take notice of: the landlord was by far better off than the justice; he was not only paid for his chaise, but the fowl, and even for the two post-horses which were used in the pursuit; whilst the other never knew where or how to recover a shilling. The postboy, however, with a crown in one hand, and his hat in the other, with a very low bow heartily wished his honor a good journey to London.

A circumstance which happened during the course of Mr. Semple's lucubrations, between his servant and the lady to whom Mr. S. thought proper, *pro tempore*, to lend that name, may not be altogether unentertaining; at least it will vary the scene, and afford a relaxation from that continual string on which we have already for a considerable time so very loudly thrummed.

In page 41, we mentioned his being at Mr. Careless's, White Hart, Watford. It was there that the gentlewoman who made use of the name of Semple, and every other name which the gentleman of that name had occasionally complimented her with, was detected in an amour with her own
serving

erving man, John Winter, by no less a personage than the Major himself. The consequence was a mutual discharge of manual compliments and services. The lady knelt for forgiveness, and the Major's tenderness granted it.

But this was not all that attended Mr. Semple there; his unlucky stars distressed him still further. His bag and baggage were detained by Mr. Careless, and conveyed into the hands of Sir Sampson Wright: letters from Mr. Pitt, &c. &c. were discovered, with a pile of others, that made Offa like a wart. They have been transmitted into the hands of Lord Sydney, the secretary of state, and we are afraid, for ever irretrievable; unless it should be thought proper, in mercy to mankind, to suffer a history to be published, which would astonish the world.

When we make use of so large an expression as the world, we do not mean to confine ourselves to a circumference of three miles, as Goldsmith's midwife did; who had never been farther in her life, had lain all the farmer's wives in that circle, and boasted of her knowledge of the world; nor do we mean a circle of a little larger magnitude, viz. that of Great Britain and our town of Berwick-upon-Tweed; but we mean an extent still more spacious, which the following letter will best explain.

S P A, July 4, 1786.

S I R,

ON my return to this place from Prussia, I should think myself negligent did I not convey my respects to you by the earliest intelligence, and to acquaint you that I suffered much in my health, which I thank God is now much improved, no thanks to the party that occasioned it. I have been at Bonn on the Rhine ; and if the infamous S—— is ever seen there again, he is a prisoner for life, as he is more notorious in that place than in London, and THROUGHOUT THE CONTINENT. Mr. Heathcote has detained the carriage, and put his arms on it, and the banker has got both his cloaths and mine.

When at Bonn, Lambert's father and mother were unhappy beyond expression relative to the boy. If you could give me the least hint of him to satisfy the parents, you would do them a singular piece of charity.

I am, Sir,

Your most devoted humble servant,

JOHN WINTER,

The

The reader will excuse us putting the address as we have not the consent of the gentleman so to do.

Mr. Heathcote, the gentleman mentioned in the above letter, is resident from the English court; and, according to the custom of the country, seized the carriage, for the use of those to whom it more properly belonged.

At Hamburgh, he contrived to get himself introduced to Mr. Matthias, the envoy; and by the means of that introduction to recommend himself to Mr. Matthias, in Scotland-yard, treasurer to her Majesty. Mr. J. G. Semple accompanied Mr. Matthias one evening to Covent-Garden house; and under pretence of having changed his breeches, and left his purse behind him, he obtained five guineas of Mr. Matthias.

It would not have been extraordinary had this matter rested singly; but on some other pretence he obtained an equal sum of the same gentleman.

Being at Egham, he contrived to make himself acquainted with Dr. Ogilvie, a very worthy divine of that place; and having so done, and found by that means the tradesmen and others with whom the doctor dealt, Mr. Semple obtained credit of various people. Having also been seen arm in arm with the doctor at Windsor, wherever the latter went into a shop the Major went afterwards, and got goods of some and cash of others.

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Of Mr. Gulliver, of the Duke's-Head, Belfont, near Hounslow, he obtained the sum of 10l. and gave Mr. Gulliver the same valuable security for it, as he had before given to Mr. Bailey, of Hope. But, in order to convince the reader that there could be no external appearance of poverty, we must tell him, that the Major cut a dash at Belfont; for he had servants in livery, and a carriage which he called his own: but he never thought proper to put up at the Duke's-Head after the above affront bestowed on him by Mr. Gulliver, when Mr. Semple usurped the name of Major Cunningham.

But his ingenuity was not so circumscribed as to be limited to feasts upon gentlemen who do not know the world: the gentlemen of the law, who are supposed to know most of it, experienced his address in the art of extracting gold out of the purse.

Mr. Gapper, of the Temple, accommodated him with forty pounds; and Mr. Parker, of Hallifax, with fifty.

He was not, however, quite so successful with Mr. Bell, bookseller, of the Strand: under pretence of being employed by the ministry, he applied for a considerable sum of money, for conveying intelligence for the use of the Morning Post; adding, he was going on an embassy with dispatches to Germany, intrusted to him by Lord Shelburne, which contained a secret negotiation with the Emperor.

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In this instance he was not quite a match for Mr. Bell; but in a few days after, when that gentleman was out, he called at the shop, and borrowed half a guinea, pretending he was arrested. The Major's honour still stands unredeemed at Mr. Bell's. It turned out, however, that Mr. Semple advanced the truth; for he was then actually in the custody of Mr. Charles Hyndes, officer to the sheriff of Middlesex.

Mr. Vincent, of Speenham-land, Newbury, Berks, has also authorized us to insert the following application of Major Semple to that gentleman.

The Major arrived at Newbury about the month of March last, in a travelling chariot, and two ladies with him, and put up at the Pelican. There, also, he pretended that he had been so unlucky as to leave his pocket-book behind him at London, and that his cash being expended, he was disabled either to prosecute his journey to Bath, or return to town.

He enquired of the master of the inn whether there were not some of the military quartered there, and on his being informed that the Oxford Blues lay at Newbury, Mr. Semple made his pretended distress known to an officer or two of that corps, who declined to accommodate him, having, perhaps, travelled as far north as the Major.

On this he enquired for an army agent, but none being there, he asked for some gentleman of character and respect, to whom he could make his situation

situation known. The waiter conducted him to Mr. Vincent's, who generously lent him five guineas, for which the Major gave his obligation, and took his leave with a profusion of grateful acknowledgments.

On his return, which was in a few days, instead of calling and discharging so honourable a debt, he gave himself the trouble of sending a note, with an apology, to Mr. Vincent, but took care to dispatch it just on the eve of his departure from Newbury, so that Mr. Vincent should not be under the necessity of troubling the Major with his personal appearance at the Pelican.

One little incident happened when the Major made his entré to Mr. Vincent, that may not be thought unworthy notice. On his mentioning his name, Mrs. Vincent asked him, ' Simple, did you say, Sir?' ' No, Madam,' replied he, ' not Simple, at your service, but Semple, a relation of Lord Semple's, and a Major in the Russian service.' On his departure Mrs. Vincent observed, that her husband perhaps might be *Simple*, but she was sure the fellow was no *Major*; which justifies a former observation, that the fair sex see into a sharper with much keener eyes than that philosophical animal called man.

Since the first appearance of these Memoirs, the Major, in one of his papers, complained of his offences being exaggerated, and denied any knowledge of Mr. Wood. Mr. Wood has, however,

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confirmed the facts since; as has Mr. Tatterfal likewise; part of the transactions with that gentleman as stated here, he also endeavoured to controvert. If the Major has now a single friend left, and that friend is possessed of common sense, he will recommend it to him to rest quiet, with the consolation of having escaped the disgraceful exit of many better men, not a fiftieth part so criminal.

The partiality which a candid and discerning public ever bestows on industrious merit, has enabled us to add full as many more anecdotes to that very numerous collection we have already compiled; indeed, the fund seems to be inexhaustible.

In return for so singular a mark of its approbation, we shall labour to preserve their countenance and protection; on the one hand, expressing our gratitude, on the other, rejoicing in a defeat of those drones of literature, who perpetually prey on the honey collected with labour, and manufactured with the care and industry of others. To the proof.

In the month of June last Mr. Semple made his appearance at that fashionable place of resort, the Wells of Buxton, in the neighbourhood of the Peak of Derby.

He came there in a style that portrayed a person of fashion. He had his Valet de Chambre, his own carriage, i. e. speaking more properly, the

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carriage

carriage of Mr. Lycett, with two postillions, to whom he threw a crown each, and bespoke a suite of apartments.

The arrival of this splendid stranger, who assumed all the airs and graces of a man of quality, struck a panic in the minds of the squires of the Peak. Gentlemen of fashion were smitten with envy, and the bosoms of the softer sex palpitated with the hope of making a conquest of a man of such figure and apparent fortune.

To increase his consequence, he styled himself the heir apparent of the dormant title of Lyfle; and, in order to lay the foundation for the completion of his purpose, in his journey to Buxton, Mr. Semple gave a ball to the ladies. We must observe here however, that it was part of Mr. Bishop's cash (vide page 53,) which enabled him to shine so conspicuously at this bread-and-butter manufactory.

There was not a gentleman that did not court Mr. Semple's company, nor a lady that did not prick up her ears at the sound of his name. He was accommodated with hunters, his own having, as he said, been left at Loughborough.

This consequence lasted about a week, when a rustic clergyman, who had more blunt honesty about him than most of the refined gentleman there, began to suspect the Major.——We call him Major, because it was the title he there assumed, with the
Order

Order of Merit at his button-hole, which her Imperial Majesty of All the Russias had, he boasted, conferred on him for services done her.—

This clergyman, who, if any little tale of scandal chanced to reach his ears, was sure to propagate it, in order, as we suppose, to make mankind ashamed of their vices, was paid as much respect to out of the pulpit as, perhaps, he was in it, i. e. the place was too polite to give credit to a single syllable he said.

He chanced to have a very fine hunter or two, which Major Semple wished to purchase; but, as the latter did not haggle about the price, and offered to give his drafts on his London Banker, the clergyman in the warmth of his zeal for morality, thought proper to whisper to every person at Buxton that the Major was, *ad rem* to all intents and purposes, a swindler.

Had a notorious gambler but hinted half as much, there would not have been a moment's hesitation about the truth of it; but, as it was a clergyman that set the rumour abroad, it was debated whether he should not be sent to Coventry for a scandal-monger, and for picking holes in every man's cloth but his own.—

It happened, however, one morning, that he drew ten guineas out of a gentleman's purse, when they were out on a ride, pretending he had

accidentally left his purse at the inn, on the table; but he never afterwards took any notice about refunding it. This little incident, coupled with the clergyman's account, made a complete story, so that when the Major made his next appearance, there were many long faces and shy looks.

Mr. Semple was quick enough of comprehension to discern it.—He accosted the ladies, and drank tea with them, with all the effrontery and nonchalance of first-rate impudence. His prudence was as great as his comprehension. He ordered horses to be put to the carriage, and carried his sword in his hand about the room for upwards of four hours, before he departed.

To wind up this excursion, we must inform our readers, that Lor Suffield, (late Sir Harbord Harbord) was then at Buxton. To that gentleman he pretended, that he had travelled with young Mr. Harbord in many places on the continent; but owned it was rather a delicate point to mention, that he had accommodated him in the route with a trifle of money, and desired Sir Harbord would acquaint him whether he should present the small account then, or wait the young gentleman's return.—On Sir Harbord's desiring to know the sum, and expressing his obligations to him for having supplied his son with cash abroad, Major Semple sat down, and soon produced a regular
account

account from stage to stage, amounting in the whole to thirty-six guineas, which Sir Harbord paid him immediately.

It was the next day but one that the Major decamped from Buxton.—What further fums he obtained has not yet come to our knowledge; many had obliged the Major, who are too much of gentlemen to destroy the obligation by divulging it.

It ought not to be forgot, for the Major's credit, that he threw a guinea to each of the waiters, and one to the tea-woman, thereby leaving Buxton with some eclat.

The following little town anecdote serves to illustrate his character, and the fruitfulness of his genius still further.

On the 26th of April last, happening to be passing through Berner's-street, he observed Lady M'C—y coming out of Mr. Bowyers's, the miniature painter, and go into her carriage.—In about half an hour afterwards he did Mr. Bowyer the favour to call and see his pictures; at the same time observing that Lady M'C—y, whom he knew was getting her picture done (and who was, as he said, one of his most intimate acquaintances) had been kind enough to recommend him to Mr. B. to have his picture painted.—He then fixed to take the first sitting the next day at eleven.—But upon getting into the
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hackney-coach, which was waiting for him at the door, he fortunately recollected he had only a 10*l.* note in his pocket, and flew back to Mr. Bowyer to acquaint him with it, and request the favour of four or five shillings to pay for his coach, which he meant presently to discharge.—Mr. Bowyer complied with his request, and upon Lady M'C—y's coming to sit to Mr. Bowyer the next day, he thanked her ladyship kindly for her recommendation of COL. GEORGE; but her ladyship could not for the soul of her recollect the Colonel, or ever hearing of his name before, who, in the midst of his great hurry of business, and very numerous engagements, forgot to take the fitting according to appointment; and Mr. Bowyer has since thought himself extremely happy the Colonel did not ask for a much larger sum.

At Norwich we have the following very singular circumstance, in which he was assisted by the person who appeared there as the Major's Lady.—

Among others with whom he ingratiated himself was Dr. M'Quin, at whose house the Major and his Lady lodged, by invitation, (as the noise of the inn was offensive to madam) in nearly the same style and fashion he had before done at Buxton.—And such was his dissipation, that though he was daily reduced to the shifts of robbing, to support it, yet no sooner was he in possession of a small sum,

sum, than he was as industrious to squander it, and rely on his invention for further supplies.

He had borrowed five guineas of the Doctor, and had dissipated it in a ball, by which he had incurred the Doctor's displeasure, he being a gentleman who knew the value of money too well, to throw it away in a manner so totally vague and empty, and without conferring any one good to society by it.—

In a short time after he applied again to the Doctor for the sum of fifteen guineas, and then offered his draft on his agent in town. To this application Dr. M^cQuin was very averse, took the liberty of rallying the Major on the lightness of his conduct, and expatiated on the ill effects it must naturally produce. To this expostulation Major Semple pleaded the appendages of a gentleman's life, and argued how necessary those little superfluities were to support the character which birth, education, and custom, claimed as rights hereditary.

In this argument it was that the lady gave an instance of her ingenuity, which by no means disparaged her paramour's choice; for, on the Doctor's declining to lend the fifteen guineas, the shock her nerves sustained was so great as quite to overcome that delicacy of feeling which generous and liberal minds must feel at a pecuniary repulse. In short, she swooned, or rather seemed to swoon away, when her situation apparently required all
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the little offices of hartshorn, water, &c. &c. and made the Doctor and his lady feel as much real concern as if the fit had been real.

When Mrs Semple was able to open her eyes, and glance them towards her dear Major, she by degrees opened her mouth, and gently chid him for the application; and giving him her keys, desired he would go up stairs and take three diamond pins to dispose of, which would produce five times the sum required, and might be easily replaced in London.

The situation of the lady, her apparent distress of mind, the agitations that the Major was in on her account, and her so readily offering to dispose of her diamonds for the Major's use, made such an impression on the Doctor, that he relaxed from his first resolution, and instantly fetched the money, of which he now intreated the Major's acceptance.

Strange as this may seem, it will turn out a little stranger still; the reader may recollect a circumstance that happened at Mr. Careless's, at Watford, with the above lady and her servant.—The scene was renewed at Dr. M'Quin's, the lady being observed to come out of the footman's room in her shift: as soon as the Doctor was apprised of it, he discharged the groupe, without the satisfaction of being paid either the twenty guineas

or

or the lodging, happy, no doubt, to get rid of guests who were a disgrace to the roof that afforded them a shelter, and a plague to every person with whom they were acquainted.

Dr. M'Quin, however, was not the only sufferer at Norwich.—Mr. Pye, a taylor, was one of those unfortunate tradesmen who gave credit to appearances, and of whom Mr. Semple has, for a considerable number of years, made a constant prey.—Indeed, without a taylor no man can appear like a gentleman: the equipments of the head and heart may have some trifling consideration with a few unfashionable fellows, but a knave in embroidery has always the countenance and support of the *beau monde*. The advantages he derived from his lodging at Dr. M'Quin's, he took care to pursue with the eagerness of a thorough-bred gamester. Having made use of the usual artifice of drawing a letter from the Doctor, and having also made his way to Colonel Debbeig, who was a particular friend of Dr. M'Quin's, by producing that letter, and urging his intimacy, he obtained five guineas from the Colonel.

The Major assumed also his usual modesty on the occasion, by soliciting soon after the sum of five more; but which were positively refused him, through the circumspective eye of the Colonel's lady, who saw a little more into the Major than the Colonel; and by her advice it was that her

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husband

husband was a sufferer for the sum of five guineas only.—

By a similar pretence he got six guineas of Captain Seaton, at Thirsk, in Yorkshire; but with Dr. Aiken, of Yarmouth, he was a little more successful, for that gentleman generously offered, and the Major as readily accepted, the sum of twenty pounds.

An innkeeper at the last mentioned place, whose name we have not yet learnt, was still a greater sufferer than Dr. Aiken, for at that inn he borrowed twenty-five pounds, which, like the rest of the Major's borrowings, still remains unpaid.

Of Mr. De Roman, hatter to the Duke de Orleans, in St. James's-street, he obtained a fine riding-hat and feather for his lady, and a *chapeau à la Russe* for himself; pretending he was in the Empress's service.—At this period the Major lived in Bond-street.—Though the reader must, by this time, be tolerably well convinced, that Mr. Semple's assurance did not stick at trifles, yet he can scarcely imagine that he had effrontery sufficient to conduct himself to the table of the Marquis of Lansdown, then Lord Shelburne.—This, however, is the fact; he not only dined, but was intrusted with dispatches, to carry abroad, by the Marquis.

We are still strangers to the means by which he introduced himself, but we have it from unquestionable authority, that he referred the Marquis to a gentleman of the Temple for his character; for the

the character of which gentleman the Marquis was referred to the Master of the Rolls, whose *report* was to the following effect: "*That if Major Semple was a friend of Mr. G——d's, there could be no difficulty made about employing him.*"

It was in consequence of this enquiry and report that Mr. Semple was intrusted with dispatches to Vienna; which he shamefully neglected: they lay at Mr. G——d's a considerable time, and were afterwards removed to Mr. Careless's at Watford; from whence, with two others, they were transmitted to Sir Sampson Wright, who, as before mentioned, delivered them to the Secretary of State.

The adage is old, but not less true, "that great wits have short memories:"—That Mr. Semple lived by his wits, few will be bold enough to deny; and that a man who can, for a number of years, live daily by them, must be a great wit, there are very few but will allow. Having, by this kind of reasoning, established the *Major*, we come to prove the conclusion, his short memory.

It was at one of the foregoing hours of intercourse, viz. at dinner, that Mr. Semple gave a glaring proof of the shortness of his memory. The subject turned on politics, and at last came to the late peace, when Mr. Semple, with all that vacuity of thought and absence of mind, which so often distinguishes great wits, took occasion to observe, "*That it was the most damned peace that ever was made.*"

The Marquis's fork, which was on the tip of his lip, with a morsel of chicken on the point of it, was, with hand and arm suspended thereon.—He stared at the Major, the Major stared at the Marquis, who, in a few seconds, ejaculated, "Sir!" to which the other replied, "My lord!"—"I beg your pardon," said the Marquis, "I thought, Sir, you called for a glass of wine." "Oh, no, my Lord," replied Mr. Semple, "I said it was the most damned peace that ever was made."—"Then I'll help you to a good one," answered the Marquis; and immediately began to load the Major's plate, meaning, no doubt, it was high time for him to stop his mouth.

The great art of living *with* the world is, to accommodate our opinions to those of our company;—to fathom their inclinations, their prejudices, their passions, and assimilate our own thereby, in proportion even to their moral as well as political barometer, else we can never meet with the good opinion of our equals, or the countenance of our superiors.—When we say this, we mean to regulate our opinion by the natural depravity of mankind.

The fact will speak for itself better than a thousand comments. From that hour Mr. Semple never sat down to table with the Marquis; and whenever he called on business was sure to wait a most considerable time before his name could even
be

be announced, but much more so ere he could gain an audience.

The late Dr. Goldsmith (the good-natured reader will readily pardon the comparison) made once a similar blunder with the very self-same great personage. — They both happened to be in the stage-box of Covent Garden Theatre one evening, when the Doctor, who was then a stranger, was introduced to his Lordship. The latter professed himself exceedingly happy ; was honoured by the Doctor's company, and invited him to supper, which was accepted. However, in the course of the conversation at the Theatre, his Lordship observed, that the Public-papers had given him the appellation of Malagrida, but for what reason he could not discover. — Nor I neither, said the Doctor, for every body knows that Malagrida was a very honest man. —

This abrupt and uncourtly wit lost the Doctor a supper, and the honour of his Lordship's good opinion, who never spoke to him during the remainder of the entertainment, or took notice of him at parting. —

But, anecdote and wit apart, we must confess that there is something so atrociously mean and base in the character of a SWINDLER, that it were to be wished swindling was made a capital offence. — The highwayman ranks very low, indeed, in the scale of criminality, when compared to the swindler, because he is oftentimes urged by motives which
excite

excite our pity and compassion, whilst he hazards his life; but the swindler is a wretch, who ignobly exists by taking advantages of the generous credulity, and those amiable weaknesses of human nature which are the ornament of mankind.

In the course of the last year we trace our gentleman to a lodging at the Leaping-Bar, over Black Friar's Bridge, where he had retired from the noise and bustle which his consequence had occasioned at the court end of the town.

It was at this place that his good genius afforded him an opportunity to carry into execution a scheme of a more, if we may be allowed the expression, rascally nature than any he had hitherto practised.

The hair-dresser waiting on him one morning, Mr. Semple seemed angry that the master did not attend him; for which neglect the journeyman apologized, by saying, his master would have come, but he was getting ready for a journey to Scotland.—To Scotland! said Mr. Semple, what part is he going to? To Edinburgh, Sir, replied the journeyman.—And pray what sort of a man is your master, and how does he dress?—Oh, Sir, answered the frizzeur, he is a very good looking man, and dresses quite genteel.—Then tell him, said Semple, that he is exceedingly lucky, for I am going to Edinburgh, and will take him with me in my chaise. But what is his name? Kerr, answered

answered the journeyman.—Then, said Semple, send Mr. Kerr to me instantly.

The man departed for his master, who immediately waited on the Major. Matters were soon settled, and off they went that very evening—Mr. Kerr rejoicing at the good luck he had met with, and Mr. Semple congratulating himself on the good luck he expected to meet.

In this happy disposition of mind they travelled till they came to York, but when there, a little circumstance occurred, at which Major Semple seemed very much hurt. Before dinner, he went out, and in half an hour returned, expressing much uneasiness at a trick that had been played him in town. He had lent a gentleman, a friend of his, he said, a sum for which that friend had given him a draught on his banker at York; but when he presented it, the banker had no cash of that gentleman's in his hand, and declined honouring the draft.

This, Mr. Semple said, was exceedingly unlucky, as he had relied on that gentleman's bill to carry him forward; but, added he, Mr. Kerr, you perhaps have some gold about you. O yes, Sir, answered Mr. Kerr, I have fifteen guineas.—Then, said Semple, let me have them, and when we come to Edinburgh I will repay you.

Mr.

Mr. Kerr readily gave Mr. Semple the fifteen guineas, and away they went again; nothing material occurring till they came within half a mile of Edinburgh, when Mr. Semple said, he should walk, as he wanted to call on a nobleman, desired Mr. Kerr to go to Fortune's Coffee-house, and he would be with him in half an hour at farthest.

Mr. Kerr went to Fortune's; and to make short of the story, that half hour has never yet arrived.— Happily he had some friends in Edinburgh, to whom he related his story, and who supplied him with the needful, or he must have been left in a situation which none can know but those who are ashamed to borrow, too proud to beg, and too honest to steal.

With the master of Brown's Coffee-house, Mitre Court, he played off the following curious device. Having run a bill for a few pounds, and decamped without recollecting that circumstance; he was seen, some time after, sitting in a hackney-coach, near Mitre Court, by a little girl, the daughter of one of the porters of the Temple, to whom Mr. Semple was indebted a few shillings.

The child recognizing Mr. Semple; she ran and told her father; — the father ran and told the master of the coffee-house, and both ran to the coach.— In vain were all Mr. Semple's apologizes and promises,

mises, nothing but prompt payment would do with them; and finding that words would not be satisfactory, he desired them to meet him at the Treasury, where he should see some of his friends, either Mr. Pitt, Dr. Prettyman, or Mr. Rose, who, the Major said, were greatly in arrear with him, on government account, and then he would satisfy the bill and the porter.—

The bait, however, did not take, for they not only refused to give him a meeting at the Treasury, but rudely insisted on accompanying him in the coach; and stepping in, away they drove to the Treasury; where, after Mr. Semple had traversed the rooms, with his companions close at his heels, and found his foregoing friends busy about other government accounts, and therefore invisible, as the Major called it, he then proposed taking them to his relation, Lord Rawdon, in St. James's Place, where he could have any cash he wanted.

Away they drove to Lord Rawdon's, and stopped within a few doors of it. The Major left them in the coach, and went to his Lordship's house, where he knocked with as much, or more, rapidity than the owner of it would have done, and was instantly admitted.

The gentlemen left in the coach, having waited near an hour, and beginning to grow impatient, they went with an humble tap at his Lordship's; and, in a quarter of an hour, were answered to the following effect:—That a gentleman had come in,

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who

who called himself a relation of his Lordship's, said he was pursued by Bailiffs, and prayed to be let through the house into the Green Park, which had accordingly been done, out of pity to a great man in distress.

A proper explanation soon took place, to the no small diversion of the family ; and though the master of the coffee-house had three shillings and sixpence coach-hire to pay, he could not refrain from joining in the humour.

We are in possession of numerous other tricks of a similar nature, but shall conclude with the following ones :

The Major lately lodged in Mitre Court, and on a Sunday evening he went to Messrs. Butts and Hand, in Fleet-street, where he had before laid out a trifle, and thereby was known, and pretended that a friend of his had been arrested for a tolerable large sum of money ; that some gentlemen had contributed to discharge the debt, and the whole that was wanting to make up the sum was thirty-six shillings ; that having nothing but an hundred pound note about him, which was very difficult on such a day to get changed, he requested the loan of that sum till the morrow, when he would return it.

Motives of compassion prevailed over prudence. — The Major obtained the money, and *the morrow*, like his *half-hour* with Mr. Kerr, has never yet arrived.

We

We have been favoured also with the following anecdotes of Mr. Semple when in Russia. Vide the beginning of this Narrative.

By the recommendation of the Dutcheſs of Kingſton * he came to Petersburgh, and by her intereſt he obtained the rank of Aid de camp to Prince Potemkin, and with that General went to the Crimea.—On Mrs. Semple's writing to her huſband, complaining of the Dutcheſs of Kingſton's ſlighting her, he returned to Petersburgh, and by a great deal of bluffer ſo frightened her, that he obliged the Dutcheſs, before he left the houſe, to give him five hundred roubles, (about three and ſix-pence each;) he ſtaid afterwards in Petersburgh; but before he left the place ſold his carriage to four different Ruſſian noblemen, took the caſh of every one of them, and promiſed to ſend the carriage to each.

His method of getting out of the country was as follows:—He was accuſtomed to walk out at the gate of Narve, on the frontiers of Poland, with a ſervant carrying his great coat, and after his walk to return; but one day his memory failed him, and he never came back. It muſt be obſerved, that no ſtranger can leave the Ruſſian dominions

* Major Semple's diſtreſſes were impreſſed on the mind of the Dutcheſs of Kingſton by her Secretary, Mr. Lilly, in the firſt inſtance; for which ſervice, and many other acts of kindneſs, the Major very gratefully ſwindled Mr. Lilly out of a gold watch, and thirty guineas in money.

without giving notice three times in the public-papers, or obtaining a pass from the General of the Police, which must be counter-signed at the Admiralty.

He also swindled a Russian officer out of a rich regimental suit, by the following stratagem: He met him at court, and begged he would let his (Semple's) taylor look at the suit of clothes, to make some like it, in order to bring to England. The credulous officer delivered them to Semple's servants, but never saw them after.

When he first appeared at Saint Peterburgh he called himself at the English Tavern Lord Semple, and his company was courted by every body.—What is remarkable, he was presented to the Empress in an highland dress, and esteemed by Prince Potemkin as an excellent soldier.

Before we dismiss the subject of his behaviour at Russia, we cannot help observing, that with the high recommendation of the Dutchess, the favour in which he stood with the Empress, the estimation in which he was held by Prince Potemkin as a soldier, and by all persons of fashion at Saint Peterburgh, as a gentleman, it was impossible but he must have acquired an immense fortune, and been distinguished with the highest military honours, had not a natural propensity to dishonesty superseded every moral and self-consideration.

As the 7th edition was going to press, the Editor of these Memoirs received the following facts from a friend whom he can rely upon.

S I R,

AS you are publishing a series of editions, relative to the life and rogueries of Major Semple, I beg leave to inclose you a few of his singular tricks, to insert in a future edition; they are literally true.

I am, Sir,

your obliged servant,

Oct. 14, 1786.

“ In the month of January, a Mr. D—— was sitting with some friends in the Treasury Coffee-house, Whitehall, and perceiving a person in an opposite box, whose features he thought were familiar to his memory, ventured to accost him, and found, upon a mutual explanation, that his name was *George Semple*, who had formerly been his school-fellow at Edinburgh: as Scotchmen upon the recognition of old acquaintance constantly enquire into the situation of each other, Mr. D——
questioned

questioned Major Semple as to his pursuits in life, and received for information, that he had spent a considerable part of his time abroad, but the *climate* not agreeing with his *constitution*, he had thought it *expedient* to return to England, where he had formed acquaintance with some persons of the first rank, among whom were Col. St. Leger, and Sir John St. Aubin; and that the former had the day before introduced him to the Prince of Wales, who was so struck with his accomplishments, that he promised him every service in his power; he told his friend D—— that he was engaged to dinner on that particular day with a party of the officers of the guards at the Saint James's Coffee-house, but should be happy to meet him on the following day at the Treasury Coffee-house, to eat a bit of mutton, and rehearse the pranks of their boyish hours; according to this intimation, Mr. D—— provided a dinner, and the Major came, agreeable to appointment. In the course of their conversation, the dishonourable subject of these memoirs did not fail to assure Mr. D—— of using his interest in the circles of fashion to the advantage of his friend. Mr. D—— was grateful for his good wishes, and was in the act of returning the Major thanks, when their discourse was interrupted by the servant entering with a note to the ingenious principal of this narrative; the contents were instantly communicated to Mr. D——, by which he learned, that a friend of the Major's

was

was waiting for him at the British Coffee-house in Cockspur-street, from whom he expected the loan of two hundred pounds, but being short of cash, intreated his friend D— to lend him what cash he had about him; that he would discharge the expences of the dinner, meet his friend at the coffee-house, and return without fail in the evening, when ten or twenty guineas should be at Mr. D—'s service; accordingly Mr. D— lent the Major two guineas, and he departed on his embassy to Cockspur-street. But guess the surprize of Mr. D—, who, when in the act of retiring, under the idea of the bill having been discharged, was accosted by the master of the house with the account; he then understood that the honest Major had not only forgot to discharge the bill, but had actually borrowed half a guinea from the maid-servant of the coffee-house in the name of Mr. D—; it was some weeks afterwards before Mr. D— got a glimpse of the impostor, but accidentally meeting him in Titchfield-street, he upbraided him in terms of great severity for his behaviour; not so much for the deceit practised on himself, as for the mean and unworthy use he had made of his name, to rob a poor servant of half a guinea. The Major received the admonitions of Mr. D— with a sort of philosophic indifference, till finding he had to deal with a man of spirit, he consented to walk with Mr. D— to the coffee-house, and repay the money; but on
their

their arrival, the Major swore he had but five shillings in his purse, which, unwillingly, he gave the girl, and Mr. D — made up the remainder.

After this proof of *Semple's* contaminated principles, Mr. D — kept him at a great distance, and saw no more of him until one night about twelve o'clock, he heard a violent knocking at his door; on an enquiry into the cause, he found it was the Major, wet to the skin, who had walked all the way from the metropolis to Chelsea, to implore permission of his friend D — to sleep upon his carpet, as he was destitute of friends, money, or lodging; the compassion of Mr. D — overcame his resentment, and he complied with his prayer, but the Major repeated the request so often in the course of the winter, that Mr. D —, from a too firmly grounded suspicion of his honesty, was obliged peremptorily to forbid him his house and acquaintance for ever."

Having a good person, and handsome address, he generally succeeded, without difficulty, in his infamous schemes; however, notwithstanding he obtained the possession of other peoples property with so much facility, he was in some respects a great economist, and not unfrequently travelled two or three hundred miles in a post-chaise and four horses, at less expence than even a rider to a tradesman could on horseback. His method was, to consult the different books of the roads which takes notice of the gentlemens seats
in

in every county, particularly those near the great or principal roads. As soon as he arrived at the end of a stage, he always pretended some business with a neighbouring nobleman or man of consequence, to whose house he chose to walk, but first bespoke a dinner or supper, according to the hour, at the inn to which the chaise of the last stage had brought him, informing the postillions* he would be back before they could refresh their horses, at the same time ordering another chaise to be ready at his return; thus, all doubts of his honour were effectually stifled. His next step was to go to another inn at a distance, or in another street in the same town or village, order a chaise in a hurry, whip into it, and proceed with the utmost speed; whilst those he had duped were wondering he was detained so long at the gentleman's whose name he used:—in time suspicion commenced, and a person was dispatched to the gentleman's house he had mentioned: the enquiry confirmed the cheat, as the messenger of course learned he had not been there.

Thus, he is said to have travelled at little or no expence, in the stile of a gentleman, over three-fourths of the kingdom.

Another of his methods of travelling at the expence of others, was presenting bills for large

* The Major much more frequently travelled with four, than two horses.

sums, which the inn-keepers seldom chose to change, if they could.

At Leeds he put up at Mr. Wood's, the Old King's Arms, hired four post and two saddle horses, and offered a bill for 100*l.* which Mr. Wood could not, or did not choose, to change.— He then told Wood, that he was going to Hull, on urgent business, and should be back in a few days, and borrowed three guineas of him. When the six horses were returned from Tadcaster, he paid nothing for hire, but defrauded him of his three guineas, horse-hire, and reckoning.

It is, from very good authority, said, that he travelled upon the same plan all the way from Manchester to Hull, continually offering his bill for exchange, and always wanted to borrow money till he returned.

In 1778, he was at Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, in the character of Captain Semple, where his performances were as follows:

He was at the Six Bells Inn some time; never paid for board or lodging.

He took up a suit of clothes of Mr. Spink, and never paid for them.

He borrowed a sum of money of Colonel Shutz, and never paid it.

At a sale of plate and other goods at Bury, he purchased some lots, and got the landlord to pay for them; he took the lots with him, but never repaid the landlord.

He

He was one night in company with — Sylyard, Esq; of Haughley, and said he wanted to go to town in the morning, and asked him for twenty pounds; Mr. Sylyard lent him all the money he had in his pocket, amounting to five guineas; he gave him a note upon a pretended uncle at Edinburgh, but no such person was found. Mr. Sylyard has the note now.

He took in Mr. Woodward, the hatter, for a new hat.

And Mr. Decke, bookseller, the post-master of Bury, for a set of books.

In the spring of eighty-four he introduced himself to the officers mess at Mr. Clode's, the White Hart, at Windsor. On the third or fourth day of his dining there, the Colonel, who had been absent in London, came down, and joined the corps at dinner, where he presided; the Major was introduced to him as a gentleman in the Empress of Russia's service, and placed in the seat of honour, viz. on the Colonel's right hand.

When dinner was nearly over, a young gentleman belonging to the same regiment entered, and, after paying his respects generally, was going to take his chair, when the Colonel introduced him to Major Semple; the moment he heard his name, and viewed his person, he drew back, and addressed himself to the corps in these words:

" This Major Semple, as he is pleased to call himself, looking full in his face, is an im-

“ postor, a notorious swindler, whom I saw publicly kicked when I was in Yorkshire * last summer on a visit to my friends.” The company stared at the Major, then at their friend, who had spoken with so much freedom, but were totally silent for a few seconds, waiting the Major’s reply; at last he recovered from his confusion, and gave the lie direct to the base charge; the young officer, quite confounded at his effrontery, and finding the company began to think he was in an error, which the strong resemblance of persons often occasions, became almost frantic; however, he presently recollected that the same servant, that attended him in Yorkshire upon the above excursion, was then below; he immediately rang the bell, and ordered the waiter to send his servant up, who happened to be an Irishman; as soon as he entered, the Colonel, at his master’s request, examined him.

Colonel. Did you attend your master to Yorkshire last summer?

Servant. Indeed I did, your honour.

Colonel. Look round this company, and inform me if you ever saw any of them in that part of the country during the time you staid with your master.

* In the last edition Leeds was mentioned as the place where he was thus disgraced; but upon enquiry, that is not the name of the town; the fact, however, is true.

Servant

Servant. Faith I need not be long about that; sure I saw; I do not know what to call him, that person on your honour's right hand there; and he was pelted for a common cheat; upon my soul, after that I never expected to see him in such good company.

The Colonel having no longer any doubts, ordered the servant to walk up to the head of the table, and kick the Major out of the room; which he instantly did, without meeting with the least opposition.

During his visits at the White Hart, he agreed to give Mr. Clode fifty guineas for a very fine horse, formerly belonging to the Prince of Wales; however, Mr. Clode having some suspicion of the Major, sent a man and horse to dodge and seize him when he rode him out upon trial, in case he attempted to run away with the horse. The Major looked behind him several times, and perceiving the man constantly following him, suspected the cause, and for once kept his word, by returning the horse.

A Colonel C---*, who lived for some time in the neighbourhood of Staines, and our Major, were very intimate, and jointly performed several extraordinary manœuvres.

* This Colonel is also a noted swindler, and is, or has been lately, in confinement for debt.

Mr.

Mr. Styles, house-broker and brazier at Staines, lent Colonel C - - - some furniture, under an agreement of so much per month.

When Mr. Styles applied, at the usual time, for payment, this valiant military pair of heroes beat the man, who had nothing to defend himself, most unmercifully; even pursued him out of the house, and kicked him down the steps. He however did, by great attention, and at some expence, get part of his furniture back, but never recovered a shilling of his bill.

Mr. Slark, of the same town, a taylor, whom they employed, and who tried to get his money by several applications to the Colonel, they endeavoured to treat in a similar manner; but he was fortunate enough to escape by the activity of his heels.

The Colonel run up a bill of upwards of forty pounds with Mr. Crawley, coal-merchant and corn-factor, at Staines, which he employed Mr. Robert Mackason, an attorney in that neighbourhood, to recover for him. Here also our Major took an active part, and procured Jew bail for his worthy friend, by which Mr. Crawley lost the whole money and costs. Mr. White, at the Bush Inn at Staines, has furnished both the Colonel and Major with cash, post-chaise, and entertainments, to the amount of between forty and fifty pounds; not one shilling of which he has ever been able to recover.

He

He took lodgings at a gentleman's house in the medical line, near Bloomsbury, where he had introduced himself as an old school-fellow of his brother. One morning they walked into the city together; the gentleman's business led him into Mr. Stock's shop, a chemist, upon Ludgate-hill, late Mr. Dalmahoy's, where a general conversation took place for a few minutes; after which they went out together; however, the Major returned in a few minutes, apologized, as he had done to Butts and Hand, see page 101. *viz.* a friend of his was arrested, but he had made up the whole sum except three guineas, which he requested Mr. Stock would lend him, and it should be repaid faithfully in a day or two; he succeeded, and had but just left the shop, when the gentleman returned to caution Mr. Stock not to give him credit in consequence of the appearance of intimacy between them. However, the hint came too late; Mr. Stock has since declared, his manner had so totally removed all suspicion of fraud, that he would have lent him twenty guineas, if he had asked for so much.

Mr. Stock's account of his manner of obtaining the three guineas convinced the gentleman that it was necessary to get rid of his lodger directly: — as soon as he returned to his house, he went into the Major's apartment, where he found more proofs of
his

his knavery—Two parcels of goods, with bills of parcels, *but no receipts*; particularly several pair of silk stockings; he did not stay for his lodger's return, but sent to the people who had furnished the goods, and returned them their property.

When the Major came home he was desired to provide new lodgings immediately; this order was accompanied by his landlord's declaration of his motives for acting in this precipitate manner. Semple seemed much confused at the discovery, but withdrew as he was directed.

A servant Semple had then with him owned to this gentleman, that his master had been in upwards of thirty different lodgings within four months.

Mr. Croft, mans-mercier and taylor, in Fleet-street, was rather fortunate; after having delivered a few clothes, for which he was not paid, he received a second order, for some very expensive articles. While they were making, he heard the Major's character by accident, and consequently has the goods now by him *. His transactions with Mr. Croft were in the name of Winter.

The Major lodged a short time before he was apprehended at Chelsea, where he formed an acquaintance with two gentlemen, who frequented the shop

* Amongst these clothes is an expensive singular coat, which renders it unsaleable; in this coat the Major intended to appear at court the last birth-day.

of Mr. Dickie, stationer, in the Strand; he accompanied them there once or twice, and soon after came alone, and obtained a few prints and stationary, promising to pay for them next day, instead of which, he called and made an excuse for borrowing half a guinea, which he received of Mrs. Dickie: he afterwards attempted to borrow five guineas, and obtain credit for a large travelling-case, with a silver lock; but Mr. Dickie having heard something of our Hero's tricks that morning, wisely kept his purse shut, and his travelling-case for a better pay-master.

Last winter Semple happened to meet Mr. Grant, a very respectable countryman of his, at the Opera-house. He entered into conversation upon variety of subjects, in which he took care to mention his rank in the Russian army, his travels through different parts of Europe, and soon worked himself into Mr. Grant's good opinion. His first attempt at this gentleman's purse, was made as follows: He sent a porter to him, with a note, mentioning, that he had engaged to go an airing that morning in a balloon from the Lyceum; but owing to a disappointment the day before, he was ten pounds short of what he had agreed to give for this aerial voyage; that he could not think of asking credit of such people as he hired the balloon of; therefore would be obliged to him for that sum till the next day. Mr. Grant, having no

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suspicion

suspicion of the honour of his new acquaintance, immediately sent him, under cover, a ten pound bank note. It is scarcely necessary to add, that the balloon-adventure, and the return of the ten pounds, agreeable to promise, are both in nubibus, as neither have yet happened.

In his morning visits at Mr. Grant's apartments, he took notice of his hair-dresser, a Mr. Walker, who keeps a perfume shop in Saint James's Street, complimented him on his superiority in his art, and did him the favour to call upon him, and borrow, at different times, the sum of six guineas, under a variety of pretences: Mr. Grant, finding the ten pounds were not returned at the time promised, and the Major had also left off his usual visits, began to mention his suspicions to Mr. Walker, who immediately took the alarm, and informed him of his having lent the six guineas, with the manner in which he had obtained them. All doubt about him was now removed; they both agreed from that moment to exert themselves in endeavouring to bring him to justice, or recover their money; however, for some time their efforts were in vain, at last, Mr. Walker's man saw him accidentally stop in a carriage in Duke's Street, Saint James's, and go into the house of a lady, whose name we cannot upon this occasion (as will appear by the sequel) mention with propriety.

Mr.

Mr. Walker's man continued opposite the house, to prevent his escape, and employed a boy to go for his master, who, as soon as he arrived, hearing the business from his man, knocked at the door, and ran up stairs. The Major discovered great signs of fear, as well as surprize, hoped Mr. Walker would forgive his breach of promise, and take his word once more, till he had returned from the Bank, where he declared he was then going in the carriage at the door, with the lady of the house, to receive some money. Mr. Walker proposed going with him to the Bank, or where he pleased, but would not upon any consideration part with him till he had his six guineas, or carried him before a Magistrate. The Major begged, prayed, and protested he would not sleep before he paid him. It was all to no purpose; Mr. Walker was not to be moved. At last, after the lady and the Major had held a long private conversation, he brought out of an inner apartment a silver tea-pot, as security for the money; this Mr. Walker accepted, and carried home. The next morning the Major called upon him, and observing that the tea-pot was worth twice the debt, requested Mr. Walker would lend him another guinea upon it; which he refused. However, he found a friend in the neighbourhood; for though he then went away, he soon returned again with the money, and took away the pawn. The next morning, if not the same after-

noon, the lady called to request Mr. Walker would not part with the tea-pot but to her, as it was her property. When she was informed of the Major's having redeemed it, she immediately broke out into violent exclamations against him, saying, that villain had, under various pretences, almost ruined her. Without any comment upon this transaction, it is plain, neither connections, nor situations of the most delicate nature, could induce him to refrain from the most dishonourable actions that ever disgraced a professed sharper.

By intriguing with a servant, he got admission to the town-house of William Brand, Esq; of Polsted in Suffolk, while the family were absent in the country. Here he established his chief quarters for nearly two months, and derived all the credit which a very constant correspondence with himself by letters in such a situation could afford him. He made all the bustle he could with his carriage in the neighbourhood, where he was supposed to have connection with Mr. Brand, and went by the name of the Handsome Major.

It was his constant practice to gain all the knowledge of peoples property possible. He soon found that a widow lady, who lived hard by was very rich. He called on her one morning in a great hurry. A bill of thirty guineas, he said, had been presented for payment, and he was at a loss for cash just at that moment.

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He hoped she would excuse his applying to her, as it was on Mr. Brand's account, but he would certainly return her the cash the moment he came back from the city, which would be immediately after dinner.

The lady was happy that it was in her power to oblige the family, whom she much respected, or any of their connections, and readily presented the Major with the sum. She met the fate of all his other creditors, as he never after either called on her, or visited his lodgings.

Amongst the Russian anecdotes, we should have mentioned, that it is no secret to those who correspond with the mercantile part of that country, that Semple inveigled a great many people from different parts of the continent to some of those desarts and fortresses which border on the Crimea, to encourage the population of which, a bounty is allowed by government. These poor people being decoyed hither, with the view of a comfortable settlement, were landed without having any provision whatever made for them. They are said to have all perished, and that the agent who brought them from their own country put the bounty in his pocket. He abandoned the empire the moment this fact transpired.

Immediately on coming to England the last time (for he has frequently been upon the continent) he called on Mr. Southern, pretending the greatest intimacy with his brother in Russia. He said he had left
Peterf-

Petersburgh in so much haste, being intrusted with some important business of government, that he had not time to wait on that gentleman just on setting out for London. But he thought it his duty, on account of the friendship subsisting between them, to take the earliest opportunity of acquainting him that his brother and family were well in Petersburgh. Mr. Southern invited the Major to his table, where he dined with him several times.

As he called on him one day, he went into Mr. Stuart's, a perfumer, and ordered goods to the value of fifteen pounds. These he obtained on the credit of his intimacy with Mr. Southern, which Mr. Stuart could have no doubt about, as he frequently had seen them together, and was perfectly acquainted with Mr. Southern's character and credit.

At Warrington, in Lancashire, he had nearly took in a gentleman of property, as great an adept in the art of keeping, as Semple has hitherto proved himself in that of getting.

While he was in the chief tavern of Warrington he made it his business to enquire into the character, fortune and connection of all the principal inhabitants. Mr. Bent, a rich merchant, and a bachelor, appeared to him the most likely person to supply him with cash. He introduced himself to Mr. B. as a Colonel in the Russian service, on a visit, to see his friends in England. He said also he had got acquainted with a most beautiful young lady, whose fortune was immense, and was thus far on his way to Scotland,

to

to be married, as she was not yet of age. From motives of delicacy he wished to keep the transaction a secret from his friends, until it was accomplished. He found himself short of cash. He applied to him, as thinking him most likely to be acquainted with some of his friends, several of whom he mentioned. One of these it seemed lived a few miles distant from Warrington. Mr. Bent told the Major, that it would take up some little time before he could make up the sum. But as soon as it was completed he would send to the Major where he lodged. Bent instantly sent to the gentleman, whom the Major had mentioned among the list of his friends. The answer was, that they knew no such person. This being announced to the Major, (a word to the wife is enough) he marched off.

Notorious cheats, or, in smoother language, gentlemen who live by trick and cunning, are subject to have offences laid at their door of which they are *not* guilty; this is the case respecting a bill on Child, the banker, mentioned in this page of the last edition.

The gentleman who holds this bill has lately, by the Lord Mayor's permission, seen the Major in Newgate, and declares he is *not* the man.

Of a shoe-maker, at or near Egham, he (the Major) bespoke a pair of boots; the man knew
his

his general character, and took the order with indifference; however, as he was determined not to leave the boots without the money, and as they were a common size, he made them, and carried them home; when, to his surprise, he received the money the moment he had tried them on. About three days after, the Major called at the shoemaker's house, and told him, he liked the boots so well, that he would have a dozen pair made exactly like them, to take to America, where he should go shortly. He replied, "No, " Major, that bait will not do at present, I know " you; you have, indeed, deceived me once, (alluding to his paying him unexpectedly) but it " shall be my fault if you do so again." This unexpected reply, and the disappointment, irritated the Major so much, that he struck the man with his cane in his own shop, and ran out as fast as possible; the shoemaker overtook him, and with a strap, which he had in his hand, made the Major's shoulders warm, till he took shelter in a neighbouring house.

In giving an account of this extraordinary impostor, it will not be amiss to inform the reader, that he could not have reigned half the time he did, if the people in general, whom he had robbed, had not been frequently tempted to discharge
him

him upon receiving the value of their goods; he always took care to have money about him for that purpose, when he found himself likely to be taken before a magistrate, or prosecuted for fraud.

The Major lodged a short time at Nando's, in Fleet-street, a very respectable house, much frequented by country gentlemen as an hotel, and kept by Mr. Grange: here he borrowed cash under various pretences, of almost every gentleman whom he sat with; one in particular he agreed to accompany at five o'clock the next morning to Oxford in the stage or post-coach, but, as he was at supper, recollected he had no cash, and he had then no opportunity of applying to his banker, who was shut up; the gentleman whom he was to travel with, rather than lose his company, lent him ten pounds; but the Major thought proper to walk out about eleven o'clock that evening, and did not return before nine or ten o'clock next morning; his companion was consequently obliged to go alone, declaring he would pull the Major's nose the next time he saw him. The Major hearing this, put on the appearance of courage, swearing he would not sleep till he measured swords with the rascal, and ordered a chaise directly for Oxford.

The chaise came to the door, the Major stepped in, but went no nearer Oxford than Holborn; as soon as he arrived there, he ordered the boy to turn about, go over London Bridge, and proceed

to Dartford, in his way to Dover, where he arrived the next morning, and put up at the York Hotel. Here he saw several servants, in a handsome livery ; he enquired of one of them who his master was ; the man replied, SIR SAMSON GIDEON, who is just arrived from the continent. The Major requested he would inform Sir Samson, a gentleman wished to pay his respects to him. The servant observing the Major had the appearance of what he styled himself, delivered the message to his master, who desired the stranger might be admitted. After the usual salutations, Sir Samson requested to know what circumstance he was indebted to, for the honor of the visit ? Here the Major put on the appearance of great distress, and declared himself the most miserable of men, having but the morning before *mortally wounded* his man in a duel.—The quarrel, he said, happened at Nando's Coffee-house, where his antagonist lodged ; they were both unhappily a little heated with wine, and their seconds also, or the unfortunate rencontre would not have taken place. To add to his distress, he had not time to call at his banker's, and was actually flying to the continent with only two or three guineas in his pocket. Sir Samson immediately presented him with ten pieces, wished him a safe voyage, and a speedy end to his present embarrassment.

When

When Sir Samson arrived in town, he sent to Nando's to enquire after the unfortunate man who had been *mortally wounded*, and then discovered the whole imposition.

A few days before he was apprehended, he introduced himself to Mr. Chapman, woollen-draper, opposite the New Church in the Strand, *as the son of Lord Semple*; observing, that, as he had furnished cloth, to clothe his father's regiment, he would, being now returned to England, after a long absence abroad, deal with him, for such trifles as he should want in future for himself and servants. Mr. Chapman had really served Lord Semple and the regiment, therefore had no doubt of his being the man he had reported himself; he thanked the Major for his intentions, and let him have about eight pounds worth of cloth, for which he took his note.

It is a question among the gentlemen of the law, whether this transaction is any more than a debt. Some, however, are of opinion, that, as he personated Lord Semple's son, which it is notorious he is not, it is a fraud.

At Mr. Chapman's, in order, it was supposed, to ingratiate himself, and obtain large credit, he had ordered a parcel to be left, directed for himself. This parcel, when he was apprehended, was delivered to the Lord Mayor, and found to contain the letters from Mr. Pitt, Dr. Pretyman, and

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others, which he had so frequently and advantageously displayed before. Some time after he was committed, he petitioned for those letters, as useful in forming his defence; and his Lordship humanely returned them.

He lodged a short time in Mitre Court, Fleetstreet; during that period he employed Mr. Andrews, hair-dresser, in Tanfield Court, in the Temple, to dress him; on the day he agreed with Mr. Andrews, he ordered him to come *himself* at four o'clock, and not to send one of his men, for he was going to dine with Mr. Pitt, and must therefore be dressed in the best manner.

Mr. Andrews kept his word, and, to his surprize, found him sat down to an excellent dinner, which had been just sent from Joe's Coffee-house. Mr. Andrews, while he waited in the room where he was dining, could not help observing, that he understood he was to have dined with Mr. Pitt. The poor Major was quite confused the moment it was mentioned, and in a hesitating manner said, "God bless me, so I was, I had quite forgot." Mr. Andrews suspected him from that moment; yet he had the adroitness to borrow six guineas of him that afternoon; and in a few days, for perfumes, curls, dressing, and cash, he disappeared, about nine pounds in his debt. Brown's and Joe's coffee-houses, which are both in the same court, had the honour to board him elegantly and *gratis*, while he lodged there.

Of

Of Mr. Chambers, wine-merchant, in Craven-street, he borrowed seventeen guineas, under similar pretences with others which he had often used before.

Of Mr. Worboys, silver-smith, in Fleet-street, he obtained several small articles, and borrowed half a guinea in cash; he made other attempts, but could not succeed, as Mr. Worboys was upon his guard.

Notwithstanding the black and numerous list of frauds already exhibited against Major Semple, we may, with great attention to truth, assert, that this pamphlet has not exhibited the whole of his offences, either in magnitude or number, particularly in the northern parts of England.

He was at Leeds about two years since, and obtained a message from a young lady whom he danced with at a public ball, to her brother at Halifax: the lady happened to mention, that she was only on a visit at Leeds, and that her home was at Halifax, where she lived with a brother; this was excellent information for our Major; it was all he then wanted; he immediately replied, I am going upon a recruiting party to Halifax, and shall set out soon in the morning; if you have any letter or message to your brother, I will think myself honoured by your commands. The lady said, you may give my love to him, and inform him I intend to return home in about ten days,

days, at the same time giving him her brother's address. He was now in his element; this message gave him a new opportunity of displaying his talents, and duping the unwary. The moment he arrived at Halifax, he introduced himself to the lady's brother, who entertained him in the most hospitable manner: after he found himself in possession of his host's good opinion, he began to open his masked-battery, and play upon his credulity, told him he was son of General Phillips; that he was himself Captain Philips, of the fifty-second regiment; that he had spent his money, and wanted fifty pounds to carry him on his recruiting journey, and enquired if he knew any army-agent in the town; the gentleman mentioned Mr. Breckon. He then took no further notice, but in a few hours after he completed his business, as will appear in the sequel of this anecdote. After dinner he walked out for a little fresh air, went to Mr. Breckon, and having introduced himself as Captain Philips in the manner before-mentioned, said he would be much obliged to him for fifty pounds, for which he would give his draft, payable in twenty-one days, upon his agent in London: he mentioned (in order to remove all suspicion) his intimacy with the lady before mentioned, and her brother, also her relations and friends at Leeds and Halifax, though, in fact, he knew nothing of any of them, except what he had learned of the brother in answer to his

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his questions concerning his family and friends; and, in order to lead him on, was very communicative respecting his own family, particularly his father's campaigns, and honourable death, in America.

In short, Mr. Breckon was, though a gentleman of experience in life, most completely thrown off his guard, and laying his usual prudence aside, advanced the money, taking his draft in the name of Philips, which turned out just as valuable as a slip of blank paper.

Neither Mr. Breckon, nor the gentleman through whom he gained his confidence, nor even his lovely sister, as he called her, ever saw him after.

At Durham, and at Darlington, he raised a few pounds between Mr. Richardson, senior, who kept an inn in the first place, and his son, who also kept an inn at the other. Here he was Major Sawyer.

He was arrested at Oxford, (vide page twenty-five,) for or about thirty pounds: when in the officer's house he wrote to Mrs. Semple, to raise the money necessary to discharge debt and costs, and she, forgiving the train of injuries which she had combated through his villanies, prevailed upon Baron Hompesch, whom he had before defrauded (see page 28.) to lend her the money, which he did. Mr. Mann, of Mitre Court, who has a large family, and keeps a little fruit-shop, was, on account of former proofs of fidelity, entrusted with the money, and received a guinea himself, for his expences and trouble in going and coming from Oxford. He liberated the Major, agreeable to his instructions, who, in return, *borrowed that very guinea of him*, which he never returned.

He tempted Mr. Feltham, who took him in the singular manner related in page 59, by offering him

him the full amount of his debt, and 20 guineas beside; but he, with proper spirit, replied, "*The crown of England shall not ransom you.*" He kept his word, and he deserves the thanks of the public, for preferring their benefit to his own private emolument. He was, however, first tried for robbing Mr. Lycett, a coach-maker; *vide* the Trial, page 105 to 117; and had he escaped conviction for that offence, Mr. Feltham's, and many other indictments, were prepared, in order, if possible, to bring this enemy of mankind to justice: there were no less than seven bills found against him by the GRAND JURY!!

We cannot close this account of Mr. Feltham's spirited conduct better than by inserting the following unanimous vote of thanks, which has appeared in the Public-papers.

The Guardians; or, Society for the protection of trade against swindlers and sharpers.

At a quarterly general Meeting of this Society, held at the Mitre Tavern, Fleet-street, on the 29th of September, 1786, it was unanimously resolved,

That the thanks of this Society be given to Mr. WILLIAM FELTHAM, of Fleet-street, hatter, for his vigilance and activity in apprehending and bringing to justice, *James George Semple*, commonly called *Major Semple*.

By order of the said meeting,

EDWARD S. FOSS. Sec.

At a subsequent meeting of the said society, they have, in addition, voted Mr. Feltham a piece of plate.

When

When he was removed from the Compter to Newgate, and the turnkey was *dressing* the Major with an ornament to his silk stockings, he begged that a gentleman of his character and importance might not be so disgraced. That he was treated like a gentleman at the former prison, where he had behaved himself like a gentleman also, having slipped five guineas into the turnkey's hand.

This, however, being a falsehood, and, instead of having behaved himself like a gentleman, he had left the Compter a few shillings in the debt of a poor old washerwoman, the turnkey of Newgate was deaf to his importunity, and ornamented his leg with a chain of that construction and enormous weight, which we often see hanging at the fobs of many of our modern fops,

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Trial of James George Semple, alias Harrold, &c. &c.

ON Saturday the second of September 1786, the PRISONER was put to the bar, and arraigned before Mr. Justice Gould and the Recorder of London. The indictment stated, that James George Semple, otherwise Harrold, otherwise Kennedy, did on the first day of September 1785, of Richard Lycett, coachmaker, one chaise, commonly called a post-chaise, of the value of fifty pounds, *feloniously steal, take, and carry away* against the peace, &c.

The *alias dictus* having been added, in this indictment, to the substantive name, and no other objection being made thereto, Mr. Lycett was called, who swore

That he was a coachmaker in Whitechapel, and let out carriages for hire; and that he knew the prisoner perfectly well. That on the first day of September, in the year 1785, the prisoner came to his house, and hired a post-chaise for three weeks or a month, for which he was to pay five shillings per day; that the prisoner had the carriage delivered to his order, which carriage Mr. Lycett never had the pleasure of seeing again, nor
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the prisoner, till Mr. Lycett saw him in confinement in the Poultry Compter.

Mr. Lycett further swore, that the prisoner came to him recommended from the Saracen's-Head, Aldgate, where he then lodged. That he had hired a carriage of him once before; which was on the 10th of July preceding, for six shillings a day, which he returned on the sixteenth, and paid for.

That the carriage which the prisoner had the second time, and for which he then stood indicted, was by the prisoner's direction altered, by having pistol holsters put to it, and a net to the roof, with the platform reduced to the size of the Major's trunk.

He also swore, that the prisoner told him that the carriage was wanted for a tour to the north; that it was delivered on the same day to a servant of Mr. Bolton's, John Deacon, who keeps the Saracen's-Head Inn; that it was three weeks or a month for which it was hired, and that it was to be returned in that time.

That he had never heard from him afterwards; that he was sure the prisoner at the bar was the same person, and had not the least doubt of it. That there was no agreement to sell the chaise, or to keep it longer than three or four weeks, and then pay fifty-two guineas for it; but that the prisoner said, ' Suppose I should have a mind to buy it, what

‘ would it be worth?’ to which Mr. Lycett replied, ‘ About fifty-two guineas;’ but that there was a sale, either absolutely or conditionally, Mr. Lycett positively denied.

He added also, that, unfortunately for him, this was not the chaise the prisoner had first spoke about; the chaise he obtained was almost a new one; the other, which the prisoner had before, and which he had then let to a gentleman for three or four days, was an old one.

The Recorder of London, who tried the prisoner, then put the following questions to Mr. Lycett.

Did you part with the chaise with any expectation of the prisoner’s being a purchaser? to which Mr. Lycett replied, By no means.

The evident meaning of the above question was, to shew what was in the contemplation of the parties at the actual time of the prisoner’s hiring the carriage; for if there had been any idea of a purchase, the felony would have been instantly reduced to a simple debt.

Mr. Lycett then underwent a very long and critical cross examination from Mr. Garrow, who was *concerned* for the prisoner as his counsel.

Mr. Garrow seemed anxious to bring him to acknowledge that he meant to have made it only a debt. This, however, Mr. Lycett flatly denied. His evidence afforded much entertainment to the court from the consistency of his story, his unembarrassed

embarrassed attention to what he was about, and particularly by the smartness of his replies.

He was asked who was concerned in the prosecution, and whether it did not originate at the instigation of Mr. Feltham, hatter, in Fleet-street.

Mr. Lycett acknowledged his obligations to Mr. Feltham for his advice; but added, that he believed his own pocket would be faddled with, and was able to defray, all the expences of the prosecution.

Well but, said Mr. Garrow, how did the prisoner demean himself? Did he go about the business as you and I would have done?

O no, said the witness, his address is very different, I assure you. He is not so *rough*; he is a gentleman; his manners are perfectly *polished*.

Mr. Lycett produced his book, at the request of the counsel; when it appeared that the prisoner had obtained the first chaise under the name of Major Harrold.

It appeared also, that after the name Harrold, there had been an erasure, on which erasure stood the name of Semple; and being interrogated strictly on this point, Mr. Lycett said that he put down every name which he had heard the prisoner had went by; that there were three or four names at times put down, one of which had been the Marquis of Carmarthen; and that he put every name down till he had got the right one, which he discovered about three quarters of a year ago,

ago, at a Mr. Sadgrove's, a hair-dresser, at Knightsbridge, with whom the prisoner had lodged.

He was then asked, if he had not called the prisoner a damned scoundrel, and said that he would arrest him for 50l. The former part of the question Mr. Lycett readily acknowledged, but positively denied the latter.

Mr. Lycett, in his cross examination, further said, that he never gave the prisoner a bill of 50l. for the chaise, nor ever sued out any writ against him: that his servant, John Marchant, delivered the chaise to Deacon: that the prisoner behaved in a fine flourishing and polished manner; and that he should have rested very happy if the carriage had been ever returned. He denied ever receiving a bank-note of ten pounds in part of the carriage; and said that his own pocket suffered for the prosecution; however, he thought it right to punish such offenders.

Mr. Garrow then made an ingenious supposition, that where the erasure stood in the book, there had been wrote "or to pay fifty guineas;" but this Mr. Lycett positively denied.

John Marchant, apprentice to Mr. Lycett, proved delivering the carriage to Deacon: and Deacon proved fetching it away from Mr. Lycett's. But although it appeared that Deacon had drove the prisoner once to Barnet and back, and took him up at Sadgrove's in Knightsbridge, and drove him to Uxbridge, from thence to the Duke of Portland's at Bulstrode and back to town, yet
this

this witness could not swear to the prisoner. On his first standing up to give his evidence, he desired to know who was to pay him for his trouble and loss of time; for which he was severely reprimanded by the court.

Mr. Bolton proved that the prisoner had been a customer of his in the name of Harrold; that he went with him to Lycett's when the carriage was hired; and that he knew nothing of any bargain but that of hiring.

Mr. Silvester, who was for the prosecutor, being but just come into court, asked Mr. Bolton, If the carriage was purchased or hired? To which Mr. Bolton replied, Hired.

The evidence being closed, Mr. Garrow addressed the court in a very long speech, to shew cause why the prisoner should not be put on his defence, as the fact stated to the court made it only a debt, and not a felony.

He cited many cases, or rather ingeniously construed many cases, in a way contrary to their legal constructions; and blended the fact of hiring with the supposed conditional purchase, on which he argued a considerable while.

He begged leave to call the attention of the court to such particular circumstances in the case of his client, as he trusted would render all defence on his part unnecessary. The transaction, in his opinion, had all the requisites of a bargain between one man with another. Taking up the matter on this ground, he produced a variety of cases to establish

establish this proposition, that as there appeared to him a bargain or agreement between the parties, Major Semple was chargeable only with having failed in fulfilling this part of the contract. The consequence was, that he could have redress by a recovery of his property in a civil suit. This was the jet of his argument; and he contended that it would rest with the Court to determine what the real nature of the fact or transaction between his client and Mr. Lycett was; and if they admitted with him the reality of a contract, he was satisfied in his own mind, that it was impossible that the case before the court could warrant a felonious charge.

The Recorder here stopped Mr. Garrow, and desired him to confine his argument to the hiring, as the purchase was denied, and said it was the province of the Jury to determine what the contract was. Judge Gould entirely coincided with the Recorder. Mr. Garrow then argued simply on the hiring contract, and contended it was no felony.

Mr. Agar said a few words on the same side as Mr. Garrow, and called the prosecution an extraordinary conversion of a mere Westminster-Hall business to the bar of the Old Bailey.

He owned that he did not feel the force of the argument from the cases which had been quoted. He thought them inapplicable, and presumed the reasoning they were intended to support would be deemed inconclusive. He admitted the contract

was

was not fully proved, and argued on the supposition that there was none, that it was only a hiring simply, and that it was a hire for a specific time. But he desired the court, and particularly the Jury, to beware of the consequence of pronouncing his client guilty, because he had not delivered to Mr. Lycett his property within a certain time. He denied that there was any law existing, by which one man could charge another feloniously for not keeping his time to a day: and where could the line be drawn? No limitation of time whatever could constitute felony by the laws of England. He therefore thought his client's case would bear him out on these principles, even supposing he could produce no exculpatory evidence.

Mr. Silvester was going to reply, when the Recorder stopped him, and said he need not give himself any trouble on the subject, because if the Jury believed the evidence, there was no question of law. He was joined in opinion by Judge Gould, who thought the case fully within the late adjudications. The opinion of counsel being thus over-ruled, the prisoner was called upon for what he had to say in his own behalf, and addressed the court as follows:

THE PRISONER'S DEFENCE.

He informed the court, that while he lodged at the Saracen's-Head, he had occasion to hire a carriage. There being none at the inn where he was,

to his mind, he was recommended to Mr. Lycett, from whom he hired one for seven days, as it was marked or entered in Mr. Lycett's book. Not long subsequent to this transaction, he bought a carriage from Mr. Licet at 50*l.* This he had upon trial. If it suited him he was to pay for it a twelvemonth afterwards; if not it was to be charged to him at 5*s.* per day. Mr. Lycett, however, alledging that altering the chaise for his accommodation had cost him a good deal of extra charges; and agreeing to defray these, Mr. Lycett presented him with a bill of about 6*l.* The prisoner then gave him a 10*l.* bank-note.

This was the substance of the prisoner's defence, which was not uttered in a manner that did much honour either to his education, his acknowledged abilities, or his appearance.

Mr. Lycett being asked about the 10*l.* note, said, 'The Major had flourished his hand about in his pockets, and jingled some money, but he never saw either cash or notes.'

WITNESSES FOR THE PRISONER.

Mr. James Sadgrove was called, and swore that Mr. Lycett had told him he had let Major Harold a post-chaise on trial, and that, if he liked it, he was to give him fifty-two guineas for it. Sadgrove acknowledged, on his cross examination, that some gentlemen had been with him from the prisoner.

Mr.

Mr. Lycett most positively denied any such conversation; but owned that, not being a lawyer, he could not tell whether or no, if he could have then found the Major, he should not have arrested him.

John Bowes, a hackney-coachman, was called to know, if ever he had heard any conversation between the prisoner and Mr. Lycett about the chaise. He had driven the prisoner several times to Mr. Lycett's, but never followed him into the house or shop, and therefore heard no conversation.

The Recorder, with that impartiality and fairness which has ever distinguished his judicial character, and with a discrimination which reflects equal merit on his abilities, summed up the evidence, and stated every part of it for and against the prosecution, with great candour and exactness, in which he replied to the objections urged by the prisoner's counsel. He denied that there was any thing like a contract for a purchase proved. So that there was not the least foundation for any reasoning on that supposition. There was in his opinion, yet less weight, if possible, in the argument urged by Mr. Agar; for it struck him as fairly and completely made out in the case that the hiring which had taken place was no more than a pretext made use of by the prisoner for getting possession of Mr. Lycett's property, that he might convert it to his own purposes. The hiring a chaise before, and honourably paying the debt incurred by that means, carrying on these transactions under a

fictitious name, and never having to this moment produced the carriage, were circumstances which shewed that the property had been obtained with a felonious intent. That the chaise was not hired with any view either to return it, or pay for it, and that the prisoner appeared to have no other object in what he did, than to realize whatever the chaise could fetch for his own use. The simple question therefore on which the Jury were to decide, was the nature of the transaction between Mr. Lycett and the prisoner; and this opinion, he said, met the concurrence of the first crown law authority, Judge Gould. If they thought he had really hired the chaise with a view to restore it, and pay for the time it was in his service, though from necessity he had disposed of it, however such an action might be condemned or punished as a breach of trust, the law would not recognize it as felonious. But if, on the contrary, they thought from the evidence which had been produced, that the hiring was not *bona fide* on the prisoner's part, or, in short, that they could not clear him of an intention to possess himself of this property, he could assure them there was no law against their bringing him in GUILTY.

The Jury, after consulting among themselves for the space of ten minutes, gave in their verdict—*Guilty*.

The Recorder then asked them, Whether they founded their verdict on the evidence given by
Mr.

Mr. Lycett, or that of Sadgrove; in other words, said he, Do you believe Mr. Lycett or Sadgrove? To which they replied, Mr. Lycett; when the Recorder observed, he was exactly of their opinion.

And thus ended the trial of a genius who has excited as much curiosity as his depredations have caused alarm; and for one of which the sentence of the law condemns him to transportation for seven years.

A MOTION FOR DEFERRING JUDGMENT, IN
THE CASE OF MAJOR SEMPLE, AT THE OLD
BAILEY, ON THURSDAY, SEPT. 7.

MAJOR James George Semple being ordered to make his appearance at the bar, and the clerk having announced to him the nature of his crime, and the verdict of the Jury, demanded of him, whether he had any reasons to adduce why the sentence of death* ought not immediately to be pronounced.

Mr. Garrow then addressed himself to the bench. He acknowledged the integrity and ability of the judge, who had tried his client in very handsome and becoming terms. He trusted, what he had now to say would not be imputed to any other principle than his sincere desire of doing justice to his client. He stood in circumstances peculiarly distressing and unfortunate. It was natural, thus situated, for him, like every one who had any value for the blessings of existence, to deprecate, or if possible prevent, the augmentation of that pressure
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* The offence being within the benefit of clergy, the prisoner in single felonies is allowed to plead it.

Before culprits met with this indulgence, the above question was put; and, even in clergyable offences it is still asked.

of misery with which it was his destiny to grapple, by having recourse to all possible expedients. This he conceived would apologize for the unhappy prisoner at the bar, and at the same time for the part which it was his own lot now to act in his favour. He was, indeed, solicitous to defeat any prejudice which might arise in the breast of the court against the motion which, with all humility, he was now to make.

It was, That judgment in the case of Major James George Semple, who had been adjudged by the verdict—Guilty of felony, should be postponed until next session.

He owned this motion did not originate with him; he was urged to suggest it in court by others, who thought the decision on the case of his client afforded ground for it.

The reasons on which that opinion was founded were, that the facts proved were simple and destitute of those circumstances which constituted felony. He quoted several cases in support of that position. He denied that on the face of the case there was any thing to warrant the idea of a felonious intention. All that had been proved was the single transaction of hiring a chaise. The prisoner was not prosecuted for not returning the goods, but that he took possession of them with a felonious intent.

He would assert, with the greatest possible deference for the opinion of the court, that such a verdict was not authenticated by the evidence which had been produced. It was on this single ground he presumed at this time to trouble the court, and to beseech his lordship in behalf of the unhappy prisoner, that judgment in his case should be deferred until next session.

Mr. Agar rose to support the motion, or rather request, made by his learned brother. He was in hopes that his motives in this business would bear no other construction than an honest solicitude to
urge

urge every plea in favour of his unhappy client which the case would admit. Mr. Agar also had recourse to several cases, and endeavoured to shew that the present one was altogether new, and totally distinct from any thing which had occurred within the practice of modern times. It was a fact which all men conversant with the laws of the country knew, that fraud was a crime not only well defined and generally understood, but a special act of parliament had ascertained its nature, and determined its punishment. This offence therefore was specifically provided against. Why then institute precedents, which, in his mind, had a tendency to confound those things which were already so perfectly distinct; and indeed if the law, as administered in the case of the prisoner, was to be considered as established, the crime of fraud was from that moment annihilated. There could be no such thing. Hiring, when the goods possessed by that means were not instantly returned, would henceforth be deemed intentional felony.

Mr. Recorder said, he was happy in having tried the prisoner in the presence of one of the best Crown lawyers in the kingdom*, who, fortunately, that day sat the whole time upon the bench. In the opinions which he then stated, the learned judge had uniformly agreed with him. He did not well understand the shape which the business had now assumed. Merely postponing judgment could not, so far as his discernment went, in any degree whatever serve the prisoner. He was never more satisfied in his own mind with the law, as applied to any case, than in this. The felonious intention was the first circumstance in the fact on which the prisoner had been tried, that must strike every person of common sense who took the matter into one moment's consideration. The verdict of the jury, in like manner, most perfectly coincided with the idea of what
he

Mr. Justice Gould.

he conceived to be their duty, from the most impartial view of the evidence as it lay completely before them. But, however, it was very well known the manner of redress in the prisoner's contemplation could not be obtained here. The court was not competent to make any inquiry subsequent to the verdict of jury. It was the province of his Majesty alone to afford such relief as in his royal wisdom he might think necessary for softening the severity of the law in the case of individuals.

Major Semple stated, that he only craved time of the court for the purpose of prosecuting such as had perjured themselves in their evidences against him.

His sentence.

Mr. Recorder then addressed himself to the prisoner, whom he cautioned against imagining that the genteel accomplishments which he possessed were any mitigation of the offence, for a verdict of a jury of his countrymen had pronounced him guilty. He ought to have known better, and therefore deserved exemplary punishment. This was the opinion of the court. It was his duty now to pronounce the sentence of the law upon him for the offence of which he had been found guilty; and that was, That he should be transported for seven years beyond the seas to wherever his Majesty, with the advice of his privy council, might judge it proper to send him.

SINCE

Since the Publication of the SIXTH EDITION OF THESE MEMOIRS, the following circumstances have come to the Editor's knowledge, from very respectable authority.

ABOUT the year 1778 the Major is supposed to have made his first appearance as a Soldier, at the Thatched-House Tavern, in St. James's Street, where he dined with a respectable company. He said he was the Hon. Mr. Semple, *Son of Lord Semple*, just returned from America; he also added, he had been fighting for his Country, as a Volunteer, with other young gentlemen of spirit, who formed themselves into a regiment distinguished by the appellation of THE LOYAL AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS. He was then, according to his own account, twenty-three years old, a handsome figure, and elegantly dressed, in a kind of hussar uniform, a very light gun, and neat side-arms, particularly a small bayonet, which he had acquired the art of throwing from

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his hand the distance of six or eight yards, with great exactness, so as to hit a small card repeatedly. Here he related his adventures with great vivacity, and engaged the attention of the company much;—the conclusion, to be sure, was rather serious and interesting.

He observed that, notwithstanding he possessed such a flow of spirits, he was a very unhappy man at that very instant; for, having some words the night before with a gentleman of the Guards, a Lieutenant Davis, who frequented the York Coffee-house, he found it impossible *to preserve his honour*, but by calling him out; which he had done, with great reluctance, that morning, and left him wounded, (supposed mortally) in Hyde-Park, where they fought.

Another embarrassing circumstance was, how he could reach the Continent without money? for, unluckily, he had but fifteen shillings in his pocket; however, he had a very good bill upon a gentleman of known fortune in the city, and added, he would be obliged to any of the company who, considering the peculiarity of his situation, would immediately advance the cash for it.

Whether they doubted his tale, or had not the money (about forty pounds) it is not now easy to ascertain, but it is certain he did not then succeed in his principal object, which was the negotiation of this bill.

One of the company, Mr. G——r, a surgeon, who was going to spend his evening at the Globe
Tavern

Tavern in Fleet-street, invited Mr. Semple to meet him there; where, perhaps, he might succeed better.—Mr. G. really believed the whole of his story, and therefore endeavoured to serve him from the best of motives—humanity.

Semple was punctual to the appointment, where he recounted his adventures, as before; exercised the bayonet with great dexterity, and raised the attention and admiration of all present;—but the bill still continued in his possession. He had drawn the long bow so often during that evening's conversation, that those troublesome intruders, called Doubts, had damped their inclination to supply his purse, notwithstanding his necessities were so very pressing. Mr. Semple slept that night at the Swan with two Necks, in Lad-lane, as he pretended, to evade all enquiry or search that might be made after him by the officers of justice.

However, Mr. G——r, the next morning, sent to the York Coffee-house, to enquire after Lieut. Davis, when the whole deception came out, as many others of a similar nature have, since that period.

The Major at this time began to display the contemptible profession of a Rascal; he found these sort of duels were fought without danger, yet in his own imagination raised wonder, and created respect; these honourable rencounters likewise answered another purpose; they often have, as appears in these adventures, by making favourable
impressions,

impressions, expanded the heart;—the operations of that index to the mind have an amazing effect upon the purse.

The necessity of flying to the Continent unprepared for the expences of a journey, created in his deluded companions an inclination to remove his wants, either by lending him an immediate supply in cash, or discounting a swindling bill. His purpose was answered either way, and by one method or the other he generally succeeded: experience has, however, taught him that such infamous modes of acquiring a subsistence, can be but of short duration; and though the wings of Justice are sometimes formed of lead, and therefore but slow in their motion, her fingers are made of iron, with which she holds fast those who have dared to treat her precepts with contempt.

At Birmingham he introduced himself to Mr. Clay, japanner to His Majesty, saw all his works, and entertained him with a description of the similar manufactories which he had seen abroad. After he had obtained complete possession of his good opinion, he made an apology for the liberty he was going to take; he believed he should be obliged to ask credit of his Landlady, Mrs. Lloyd, at the Hen and Chickens, where he had been three or four days, till he returned, unless he (Mr. Clay) would assist him with ten guineas, for which he would give his draught on his banker in London. This sum Mr. C. immediately advanced, and took his draught in exchange.

He then went to Mess. Richards and Co. in the same Town, and purchased twenty pounds worth of different toys and trinkets, for which he gave
another

another draught on London; then ordered a post-chaise from a different street than that in which he had lodged, and drove to Bridgenorth, in his way to Shrewsbury: on that, or the next day, Mr. Clay saw, in the London papers, the Major's person particularly described, with a reward for apprehending him: he instantly applied to Mrs. Lloyd, and found he had taken French leave of her, without discharging his bill, or returning five guineas which he had borrowed of her. Mess. Richards, who had sold him the toys, sent a messenger after him, by whom he was overtaken at Bridgenorth; and where he recovered all the goods: but Mr. Clay and Mrs. Lloyd never saw the Major, or their money, since. Mess. Richards's messenger would have detained him, in consequence of the reward offered in the London papers, which Mr. Clay had informed him of; but the Magistrate declined committing him till his identity could be proved, by sending to London.—[It is to be much lamented that our Lord Lieutenants are so negligent in the appointment of Magistrates, as some of them are too ignorant to fill even the most trifling offices.]—He played several similar tricks at Shrewsbury, but the Editor is not yet in possession of them.

We have before mentioned Mr. Gapper, of the Temple, (see page 81): since the last edition of these Memoirs was printed, our information respecting that Gentleman has been extended.—The Major called upon him one morning in the Temple, and, after conversing with him about a pretended law-suit, observing he was dressed, and going out, said, in his easy, familiar manner,
 “ Gapper,

“ Gapper, which way are you going ?” he replied, “ To a Lady’s near Bedford-square.” “ Come, that’s lucky ; I am going that way also, and my carriage shall set you down.”—As soon as they arrived, the Major enquired how long he would stay ? Mr. G. replied, “ Not above three quarters of an hour.”—“ Oh, very well ; in all probability I shall be able to return by that time, and will call and take you back.” Mr. G. bowed ; the Major returned before the time, and immediately, without sending his name, ran up stairs, and, introducing himself to the Lady, made an apology for returning so soon, which, he added, was owing to the person he called upon being gone into the country. In a short time Mr. G. and he returned to the Temple, as proposed.—Has the Reader yet discovered the Major’s views in this business ? I should rather suppose, after reading so many anecdotes of his ingenuity, he has ; however, to remove all doubts, be it known, he had now a new object to dissemble with, and he delayed the business but a short time ; for the very next morning he paid his respects to the Lady, apologised, as usual, for the liberty he was about to take, but he was most awkwardly situated : he had placed his coach-horses and carriage in the neighbourhood, for a few days, and was now going to take them away ; he had come from his lodgings without any money in his pocket, except a fifty pound bill, which the people at the livery stable could not change ; that he could not think of taking away his horses, though they had offered it, without paying the man ; and would therefore be much obliged to the Lady for five guineas, which

which he would punctually return that evening, or the next morning. It is, I suppose, unnecessary to inform the Reader, that the Major observed his usual and regular line of conduct, by never troubling her with a visit, or messenger, afterwards: however, when Mr. Gapper had occasion to wait upon the Lady again, she enquired after his friend, and mentioned the circumstance, which brought forward an investigation no way complimentary to the Major's veracity or honour.

F I N I S.

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